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# THE COMMONWEAL

*A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts,  
and Public Affairs.*

Wednesday, October 17, 1928

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## THE CAMPAIGN CRYSTALLIZES

Charles Willis Thompson

## THE DECLINE OF BERGSONISM

Henri Massis

## FOR THE NEW YORK WORLD

Michael Williams

## WISDOM'S HOLIDAY

*An Editorial*

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# THE COMMONWEAL

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## WISDOM'S HOLIDAY

NOTHING wears off so quickly as the lustre of an ideal. You can muster fine lads for almost any kind of crusade, but by the time they get to Constantinople they are tired and hungry. Indeed after one has followed a visionary around for a while, the lowly reaches of the workaday world seem very right and dear. In politics it is the robust master of the game who succeeds, not the flaming prophet whose words enkindle conflagrations. Lincoln took what was viable in the doctrine of Garrison; Hamilton harnessed the restless horses of Tom Paine and made them pull. Very naturally, therefore, we have grown a little cynical about dreamers. Mr. Coolidge's economics add to our comfort, and it seems eminently fitting that New York city politics should hinge upon charging five cents for a ride in the subway. A growing number of historians have earned popularity by finding "economic" explanations for what has happened to the race; and just the other day another of them expressed the highest degree of satisfaction with American civilization on the ground that it was making heaps of money.

For some curious reason, however, we instinctively shrink from transferring this "comfortable practicality" into one great and important sphere. When we think of educating our children, we find a thousand

reasons for suspending ideals before their gaping eyes and hardly a single excuse for feeding them on prose. The most weighty of these arguments is probably the circumstance that the children will not stand for anything else. A boy wants a hero for a father, and a still more towering hero for the father of his country. To teach him "normalizing psychology" about these things is to bore him way beyond tears. And of course it has long since been noted that girls can manufacture prince charmings beyond number, sometimes to the consternation of their practical elders. Young people are consumed with a passion for magnanimity—even when they understand it in terms of Jesse James or Moll Flanders.

Shall we not defend the children against their elders? Whether we do or not, the fact remains that to a certain extent we remain even as they. At one moment or another, we all yearn to be sacrificed upon some altar. For there stirs within us the same impulse that has perennially guided the ancient human caravan, marching beyond the business of eating and lighting the fires toward stars that loom above the reaches of uncharted immortality. The long processions of our fathers have constantly been stirred by the rhythm of some dream. Again and again they have turned with a sudden sickness from the practical things which

are impermanent and have loved a vision of permanence—even unto death. And so we are wise if we consider youth's craving for ideals not as a passing phase but as the demand of a deep and lasting human faculty for guidance and training. Our educational arrangements must reckon with this as well as with the routine of life. We need to teach inspiration as well as typewriting.

Now we find, appropriately enough, in these weeks when the schools are settling down to a year's business once again, a commentator on religious education—the Reverend George Johnson—venturing this remark: "It is the duty of the Catholic school to create an atmosphere redolent of all that is beautiful and noble and inspiring in Catholic thought and action, so that the learner, child and youth, may in very truth become 'delighted with the law of God according to the inward man.'" And as we read we come to wonder if here is not the key to the right answering of those who at present, deriving momentum for their opinions from the superheated realm of practical politics, are questioning the right of the Catholic school to exist.

It is conceded that Catholic teachers can and do teach the useful arts as well as anybody else. Nobody is excited over the possibility that the rules of arithmetic are being mishandled in the parochial school, or worried lest some sister may wrongly construe a rule of grammar. The conflict arises over differing conceptions of the ideal. Shall we recommend to our young people any higher rôle than that of sovereign citizen? Is it enough to bid them serve the community, as one unit in the vast geometric pattern of our democracy, keystones of which are Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln? Or shall we say that even the art of being such a unit depends ultimately upon having cemented oneself to a more basic spiritual foundation? Is, or is not, membership in the society of the Church fully as important as allegiance to the Union? These are the questions which discussion of the religious school envisages, and the question is settled by answering them.

Father Johnson's statement does, it seems to us, make a final response. If one can really train children to become "delighted with the law of God according to the inward man," one is feeding their instinct for idealism with the most solid nourishment in the universe. Among all the sentences in the testament of Christ, few are more priceless than this: "Your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you." You may doubt the virtue of this unparalleled promise. You may wonder if such happiness does actually dwell in Christian hearts. But it is impossible to deny that those who do possess it have been endowed with a great riches, with which no other thing can be compared. Theirs is loyalty to the one ideal which never shifts, is always untarnished, is constantly an incentive to lesser reverences. Poor Jean Cocteau, who does not seem to have clung very faithfully to his

resolutions, made this point well when he said: "God is the only pillow of which one never tires."

If the Catholic school can bring this joy—which is partly of faith and partly of understanding—into the hearts of children, how shall there be any talk of its right to exist? Of course it may not be succeeding. Perhaps the gift is scorned or pushed aside, even by those upon whom all manner of affection is poured. Or possibly those who teach fail to do their part, for reasons of various sorts. But after all the question is not so much one of measuring achievement as of indicating goals. During these long decades of effort to train people for civic progress, the actual performance of the majority has remained pretty nearly constant. It is hard to produce a vote, and impossible to get out an intelligent vote. Cupidity, prejudice, laziness are all fastened to the back of a plodding nation. Yet it does not occur to us to abandon the effort, or to tell our children to follow their noses. Who, then, can suggest that because the religious school has not attained everything on its program it ought to close down? Its efficiency may rightly be called into question, its methods may be subjected to sharp criticism, its forgetfulness of certain subsidiary aspects of education may be upbraided upon occasion. Society does have the right to demand that social training be fostered. All this, however, has nothing to do with the central theme of the religious class room, which hovers over it even as the image of the Christian life is radiant above the heads of children. Here is the thing by which it must be judged, and the thing which would die out of the world if it ceased, for some reason, to be.

As a matter of fact, if you closed the official Catholic schools others would spring up in their stead, hampered indeed by the dearth of many things but rich in the message of their masters. For the inquietude of men in the face of merely practical concerns—of civics and wealth, chemistry and railroading—is a religious inquietude, and the perennial nostalgia for the abiding ideal is a religious hunger. This is soil upon which the life of the Church will be scattered forever, to bring forth good fruit. It is futile to remark that the sources from which this life springs can never be measured or understood. Catholic experience has always been experience of a Mystery; that is why it has been profound and rich. You can explain to men, with comparative ease, the reasons why they must live a certain way in society. It is not very difficult to outline the habits of scientific exploration, or the deductions of economics. But in the end only one teacher can explain the ways of God, and that is the Church. Even though we say that while listening to it human wisdom is on a holiday, it is for and in this holiday that men really live. To call a halt to the Catholic teacher is, therefore, in a very real way to block the road of the human race. This you may attempt to do, but it is after all only the same futile gesture that Julian the Apostate made.



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### WEEK BY WEEK

**O**WING probably to the deftness of a Hearst newspaper, the secret naval agreement between Great Britain and France has become famous. A good many people likewise consider it infamous. But before leaping to conclusions it is possibly best to review the facts which led to an arrangement whereby France agreed to support nothing by way of naval armament that would conflict with Britain's earnest desire to multiply light cruisers, in exchange for an attitude of disinterestedness on the part of London regarding continental land forces. At the League of Nations conference, the Germans protested against Allied failure to carry out that clause of the Versailles treaty which specifies that when the Reich shall have fulfilled all its obligations, general European disarmament is to begin. This protest was made for two reasons: first, German statesmen can keep down nationalist reaction in their country only if they can guarantee that the country's rights are not in danger from outside; secondly, they themselves believe that these rights are being violated by continued Rhineland occupation. Therefore Count von Bernstoff hinted that if one part of the treaty could be abrogated, other parts might also be "overlooked" by Germany. The British and the French, as a result, came to the "agreement," which is jeopardized only by the opposition of the United States to any preordained solution of the naval armament problem which does not reckon with the points raised at Geneva last year. Washington has made it perfectly clear that the tenor of recent negotiations is not all in harmony with its own views as to program and policy.

**N**O REASON exists for believing that the French are at all interested in undermining American hopes, or that Britain is thinking of any navy other than one designed to permit patrol of the seas in case a new European war breaks out. In other words, the agreement was, in all probability, drawn up with no thought of the United States. Its real significance is continental. Nothing could be clearer than that the two powers feared that the League of Nations would not suffice to serve their mutual ambitions, and therefore formed a separate international combination for their purpose. This does not yet constitute a new entente, but would doubtless turn into one if the reunion idea of Austria and Germany were realized. At present the new alignment has nothing more than a diplomatic significance: that is, it blocks the German hope for getting the former enemies to differ about an important international matter, and lends a punch to current French interpretations of the Versailles treaty. But it is all so like the seeds which germinated in the world war that those who hope for peace must view the situation with the gravest anxiety. Great Britain and France have endorsed arms and circumvented the League.

**O**NE may feel that popular desire for peace has now progressed so far that neither France nor Germany could embark upon a frankly militaristic policy. Several American newspapers have published accounts of the address by Henri de Jouvenel, who is held to be the leader of French opposition to the new "agreement." It sounds eminently pacific, but in such matters the government always has a great advantage. Of unusual interest as a symbol of current feeling is the monument to Maurice Barrès, unveiled in September on Sion hill, in the Moselle country. The stone shaft is described as imposing and visible for miles around. Premier Poincaré, Marshal Lyautey and other prominent men presided at the ceremony. When one recalls the patriotic career of Barrès, who championed annexation of the Rhine provinces, it is easier to grasp what kind of idea is here being recommended to the people. Who can doubt that monuments, erected on one side of the frontier or the other during the years after 1871, played a great part in creating morale for the war of 1914? In so far as Germany is concerned, one notes, especially in the southern districts, an extraordinary journalistic interest in Austrian hopes and affairs. The "brotherhood" of the two countries is being insisted upon with a fervor never witnessed before. Who shall say what significance history will attribute to these things?

**M**R. HOOVER plays a steady, conservative game. The address at Elizabethton was minus a single reference to anything faintly like those innovations of method and direction which have made the Department of Commerce interesting to observers. Indeed it stressed only one point: Republicanism, as exemplified under Mr. Coolidge, is a recipe for American

prosperity and should be applied during another four years. Do some problems still abide with us? If affairs in Latin America are still unsettled, if the ownership of power endangers the service which average citizens may reasonably expect to get from electrical or water energy, if farmers are hard pressed to keep from getting deeper into debt—the thing to do is not to discuss these problems (which are after all difficult to understand and settle) but to hold fast to the recipe which the “people” have endorsed several times and which they have memorized, if not comprehended. This may be campaign wisdom, but it is difficult to believe that it is genuine Hoover wisdom. If the Smith habit of frankly and courageously discussing major issues should prevail with the voters after all, Mr. Hoover, his great gifts obscured by expedient oratory, may pass into history as the most eminent convert of Calvin Coolidge.

IT WOULD seem that Scanderbeg III, king of Albanians, not long ago Ahmed Zogu, president of the republic of Albania, possesses the quality of mercy. For shortly after the coronation, he freed some 2,000 prisoners, presented a month's salary to state employees, and promoted six colonels to the generalship. The new monarch will soon have ample opportunity to show that this was not simply an inaugural gesture, and that he really has the well-being of his subjects at heart. Because, unless all indications fail, the winter may see a slow extinction of the mountain population through famine. At present the situation is not critical, for there is an abundance of mulberries, grass and leaves, sufficient to make of the country about Mirditi, if not a land of plenty, at least one of content. An Albanian, of course, fares well on bird seed. But what will happen when this is no longer available? The Telegraph, of Tirana, believes that the mountaineers “will be constrained either to abandon the country or to disturb the public tranquillity with thefts, brigandage, and desperate crimes.” Necessity mothers an unhappy invention.

AND what will Scanderbeg III do about that? It has been suggested that he could alleviate conditions by fixing a standard price on cattle so that speculators could not take advantage of the needs of the mountain folk, and by discouraging the usurers who practise in these regions during times of distress. The population of the threatened district is largely Catholic. It was this same mountain region which European alarmist newspapers declared would not accept the new monarchy, hinting that the Vatican was attempting to crystallize discontent into active and open rebellion. What reports were not silenced by the appearance of an ambassador from the Vatican at the court of the king have been finally answered by the more recent action of the Catholic tribes, which, encouraged by their bishops, have come out definitely for the monarchy.

THE stock market's unprecedented absorption of whatever credit has been recently available has prompted bankers noted for conservative statement to be somewhat less than guarded in their remarks to the convention of the American Bankers' Association. And well they might have been, for few large depositors these days are willing to overlook the chance to earn a fat 8 or 9 percent on their surplus funds. It was natural that the action of the Federal Reserve system in attempting to curb speculation should find able champions, despite the fact that the increased interest rates on call loans have forced higher rates on business and agricultural credit. And seldom, in a financial address, has language been stronger than when Mr. Leonard Ayres set out to shake the optimism of speculators. On the point that stock prices are too high and must come down he was emphatic. They are selling “on expectation rather than on realization. The great rewards of business and banking during the next decade will go to the calculators instead of to the speculators.” Two days later, Mr. Raskob emerged from his political study long enough to second this warning, and for answer, brokers' loans promptly climbed to a new high.

TO THE bankers it seemed clear that the public's optimism regarding the stock market is based on its faith in the immense gold reserve of the Federal System a year ago. Gravely they pointed out that much of that gold has since been redistributed to the world, and that no one can be sure that the United States will not lose more of it during the coming year. But surely, with the attention that this depletion has been receiving in the newspapers, no speculator can be unaware of it. He is not fooling himself on that score. The cheerfulness with which stocks are being bought in the very shadow of approaching disaster must be traced to a less scientific cause: the desire of every excited bystander to jump into the parade. Enthusiasm cannot be explained entirely by figures. The probability is that speculation will continue unabated until the inevitable collapse comes as suddenly and terrifyingly as that which wrote *Finis* on the sands of Florida.

NEWS of interest from headquarters of the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade is that Monsignor Frank A. Thill, whose rank is the recent reward of his missionary work, has completed his tour of Japan, and is on his way to visit the missions of China and India. He will return to the United States in February, and the report of his findings will be awaited with interest by all who value the work being done in the Orient. Meanwhile, it is gratifying to observe, the Crusade is not losing sight of the problems at home. New Round Table units are being organized, and membership in those previously established is steadily increasing. The recommendation of Father Edwin O'Hara's *Rural America*, which is a book on mission work in our farming communities, indicates the sort of



studying that will be done by the various units during the winter. It will be recalled that the Crusade's excellent record during the past school term drew a letter of praise from the Vatican, with a new blessing for the members and their leaders.

**MR. JOHN DEVOY** lived to a great old age, representing a stirring past to thousands of Americans whose fathers had come from Ireland. When he died on September 29, more than fifty years had elapsed since the dramatic rescue of Irish penal exiles in Australia by the whaler *Catalpa*, which Devoy had managed as a man of thirty-three years. Before that time he had been one of the chief organizers of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, had eluded the British police for months, and had spent a long term in prison. Banishment to the United States was the price of his liberty. But like John Boyle O'Reilly and other patriots of that time, Devoy had developed native gifts by means of a thorough education and could battle with the pen quite as efficiently as he had ever dreamed of fighting with the sword. The Gaelic American was his outstanding journalistic venture, although he worked for many papers and—in this respect like his friend Joseph I. C. Clarke—wrote history industriously. He lived to witness an improvement in Irish affairs such as his own generation had scarcely dared hope for; but to him this gain of liberty was only a step toward the complete establishment of Ireland as an independent nation. Few men have lived through more picturesque and devoted careers, but the greatest qualities of Devoy were industry and integrity of purpose.

**THAT** the tricks of the trade are really not modern is one's inference from *The Rise of the House of Rothschild*, by Count Corti, which the Cosmopolitan Book Corporation has just published. Louis Phillipe, the citizen king of France who fished the throne from the troubled waters of 1830, was not a person by whom the Austrian government set great store. Accordingly he devised a unique system for communicating with Prince Metternich by making a kind of human dictaphone out of James Rothschild, illustrious Parisian banker, who thereupon communicated with his brother Solomon, no less illustrious Viennese banker. The remarks were then broiled in flattery and served to the imperial court, which liked them so much that the Rothschild route became the official diplomatic channel. "This," our author assures us, "implied extensive confidence in them, and meant that during those dangerous times the Rothschilds would receive news of the most important decisions before anyone else." Nor were they slow in taking advantage of tips which are hardly, one believes, paralleled in this efficient age of international banking.

**THE** columns of *Biometrika*, one of the most rigidly, even aridly, scientific periodicals, are the last spot where one would look for an interesting footnote on

history, especially Catholic history. Yet a recent number contains a profoundly interesting article by its editor, Professor Karl Pearson, on the wretched Darnley, husband to Mary Queen of Scots, and father—that fact is now well established—of James I and VI, first Stuart monarch of England. Darnley was a nephew of Henry VIII and, though his foolish face was the index of his moronic nature, Mary fell deeply in love with him and insisted on marrying him. The rest of the story need not be retold here. As Professor Pearson makes clear, the Reformers, in order the better to vilify the Catholic queen, exalted her murdered husband to a position which he had no claim to occupy, one of them even describing him as "an innocent lamb." The Professor has carefully examined all extant portraits of Darnley and the skull and thigh bone preserved as his in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, and seems to establish the fact not only that he was of deficient mental calibre and in no way competent to have helped his wife in her difficult task but that he was a victim of the same horrible contagious disease from which Henry VIII suffered, a disease which led to the dying out of the Tudors, as the Professor thinks it did to that of the Stuarts. Darnley was therefore anything but the "innocent" which Mary's enemies endeavored to show him to be.

**GEORGE TYLER**, indefatigable evangelist of the stage, will this year attempt to revive something much nearer mortification than Goldsmith comedy or an adaptation of Sardou. Through a National Theatre Foundation, which will soon be organized with Clayton Hamilton as its president, he means to quicken interest in the drama outside the confines of Manhattan. Modeled after the fashion of the Theatre Guild of New York, the Foundation will try to win subscribers in all the larger cities of the land, offering in return a season of classics, revivals and current stage successes at reduced rates. The present deplorable state of the drama on the road, as outlined in the Foundation's circular, must bring tears to the eyes of its Broadway devotees. Thus: "Formerly plays were written and produced in New York with an eye to out-of-town profits; but now the great majority of dramatic successes step from Broadway to the storehouse because their producers cannot risk the precarious venture of a tour. Every theatrical manager knows that an audit over a period of years shows a growing indifference on the 'road' to plays that should have been fêted by audiences of taste, refinement and discrimination."

**"IN MANY** of the larger cities the theatre is virtually extinguished. The population of St. Louis gets along on the three or four good plays that once in a year reach 'the Forty-Ninth State.' Minneapolis and St. Paul saw, in *Diplomacy*, last April the one and only 'road' production that had visited them within a period of four months. Toledo, a city of more than 300,000, is without any stage to receive a company;

Diplomacy and *She Stoops to Conquer* played in a skating rink in that city. Cincinnati, which splendidly supports its symphony hall, fares as scantily as St. Louis or Kansas City when it turns to the theatre." What lovers of the play there are in the cities mentioned will be cheered by the news that Mr. Tyler will endeavor to change all this. They themselves, of course, must form the nucleus of the Foundation, but whether they will be able to interest their hardened fellow-citizens in subsidizing the legitimate stage is doubtful. And yet in carrying this war to Philistia, Mr. Tyler deserves to be encouraged, as do all crusaders who flaunt their colors in the face of apathy. Good luck to him!

WHEN a literary landmark happens also to be a grog-shop, and one fashioned from the timbers of a stranded clipper ship, it would seem that more than ordinary care should be taken to insure its preservation. In view of the fact that dozens of buildings which can be connected with literature only by accepting that word in its broadest sense are being carefully guarded against destruction, it is especially regrettable that the Last Chance saloon of Oakland, fragrant with memories of Jack London and many another West Coast celebrity, should have been allowed to perish by fire. In this very place, if one remembers correctly, R. L. S. would sit by the hour, talking about his plans for the voyage to Stoddard's seas of tranquil delight. Such a landmark cannot be replaced. What few clipper ships are left these days are not being grounded in the Oakland estuary, and another Last Chance could not be built of timbers from any other source. Of course, now that the damage has been done it would be a mistake to repair it. Better to surrender to tears and salty reminiscences.

## LAW AND LIQUOR IN CANADA

THE obvious answer to recent recommendations of the Quebec plan for sale of liquor under government control as a model one is that the liquor problem has not been solved in Quebec. And the obvious answer to that is that if the past experience of several countries with prohibition and control means anything, the liquor problem cannot be entirely solved. A lessening of the abuses existing under license is about all that can reasonably be hoped for.

The flexibility of the Quebec system probably is what recommends it to critics of prohibition as one which many states could adopt to advantage, presuming an amendment to the Eighteenth Amendment. It does not ask Montreal, for instance, to abide by the same rules which regulate conduct in Trois-Rivières. Liquor stores may not be established in towns of less than 5,000 unless request is made by the town council and approved by a majority of the voters, nor in towns of more than 5,000 where the council has requested that no store be established, or where local

ordinances prohibit the sale of intoxicants. In other words, every community writes its own liquor law, within the limitations set by the Control Law of the province.

That the law is being violated, no one will deny. Speakeasies exist to provide refreshment for the tourist who arrives after the government stores and licensed taverns have been closed for the day, and for persons on the Commission's interdicted list at any time. Corn whisky, potato whisky and other delightful waters are manufactured under the white moonlight for the delectation of honest laborers who cannot afford the high cost of government liquor. For the Commission's most precious aim is to guide its clientele away from spirits and toward a proper appreciation of light wines and beers. To accomplish this, the price of liquor is advanced, and that of wine and beer made comparatively low. Consumers gratify the Commission by drinking more wine and beer, and themselves by patronizing the bush distilleries.

Prohibitionists in the province, including numerous Catholics, some of whom are organized, naturally point to these illegalities as evidences of the failure of government control. But they are hard pressed to offer a substitute. They cannot go hand in hand with the tavern keepers to demand the old license. And after six provinces have repealed bone-dry laws, Canada is not in the mood these days to hear talk of prohibition.

Quebec happens to be unique among the provinces in having never experimented with dry legislation. In the days when all the others were climbing on the prohibition band-wagon, Quebec stayed wet, and dripping wet remained until 1921, when the Control Law went into effect. Meanwhile she served to point a moral by contrast with dry Ontario where cases of drunkenness were far more numerous. Indeed, none of the provinces under prohibition was free of conditions more grievous than those now complained of in Quebec. The argument that while the cause of temperance was not being promoted, bootlegging and secret drinking were engendering disrespect for all law was repeated everywhere, and one by one Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, British Columbia, Manitoba and New Brunswick repealed their dry laws to substitute control, Manitoba going so far as to follow Quebec in permitting the sale of beer to be drunk on the premises.

This would seem to indicate that control is the one solution of the liquor problem which Canada can accept. It has tried both license and prohibition and found the one a failure, the other a travesty. Quebec will do well to continue independent of tavern keepers on the one hand, and prohibitionists on the other. True, many have grievances against the present system. Perhaps the Commission has been vested with too great authority. But that authority can be exercised only to enforce temperance. The Commission may, "at its discretion, refuse to make any sale of



alcoholic liquor except for religious purposes." But it cannot sell liquor in a town which has voted against the establishment of a store. It may interdict thousands, everywhere in the province. But it cannot remove from the interdicted list anyone convicted in the courts of drunkenness. It may close all the beer taverns. But it cannot grant tavern licenses where the municipal council has objected. These things ought to be some consolation to the prohibitionists who are the more interested and active of the two groups opposing control. They should be well satisfied, since it would seem that only an accident, such as an unwise selection of commissioners, could keep the system from becoming increasingly efficacious as the years go on.

### THE OTHER SIDE OF NATURE

WHEN everything has been said, the "farm problem" boils itself down to what is contained in the following statement: agriculture in the United States has so completely forestalled famine that the farmers themselves are in danger of something like a famine. The proceeds of the industry do not justify its present capitalization. They could do so only if the value of land declined sharply, or if the body of consumers was enlarged, or if a good many people went out of the business. To date the last expedient has been most amply tried; but it happens to be disadvantageous to society generally and is frowned upon by the hopeful. The first is bound to set in unless matters improve, and so may be ignored. There remains the second, which is conceived of by some in the form of subsidized foreign markets, and by others as the goal at which coöperative and controlled selling hopes to arrive. We here believe in the coöperative and controlled selling, for the reason that subsidies of the kind proposed have never proved advantageous in practice. One can gamble upon them, but gambling against odds is poor business.

Possibly it is normal that such topics should not seem of primary importance in Catholic discussions of the farm situation. But the extent to which concerns of faith dominated the recent meeting of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, held at Atchison, Kansas, must be termed unusual. There was excellent talk about the country from the missionary point of view. The bishop of Fort Wayne called attention to the fact that in several sections of the United States the Catholic population is more sparse than in China. He noted also that in these places the Church is exposed to misunderstanding and hostility difficult of comprehension by those who have not lived under similar conditions. Societies like the Catholic Laymen's Association of Georgia spend their time correcting the mistakes of their non-Catholic neighbors, and never run out of material. Other speakers, notably Father John LaFarge, S.J., dealt with the same problem from another point of view and suggested ways and means for intensifying the spiritual life of

Catholics in the country. Here is, at one and the same time, a campaign against "leakage" and an appeal for greater spiritual efficiency.

These addresses speak for themselves, pointing to a greater evil than any other which menaces the country. During recent generations, the rural American landscape has been spiritually denuded in a startling way. One by one, churches and chapels which once were served by a Catholic missionary (or a Protestant circuit-rider) have been closed or torn down. In many districts all that remains is a little churchyard marking the spot where a place of worship once stood. This retreat of the Church into villages and towns was inevitable and even registered a marked advance over primitive conditions. But the missionary must return, although in a guise adequate to the time. The country needs catechists of the right sort, vacation schools, social service and appealing religious ministry.

For such things the Rural Life Conference has striven, realizing that all other matters are contingent upon them. There can be no American equivalent of the Boerenbund, great Flemish Catholic agricultural organization, until an appropriate rural community exists here. It is useless for Catholic sociologists to discuss economics or finance until they have an audience. The common faith will create rural communities as nothing else will. Most of us think of these conditions far too infrequently, failing to realize that the rural society of America, though promising in many places, is spiritually far below par in whole sections of the country. If we all gave it a little of our time and interest, improvement would be almost sure to follow. Practical measures have already been developed by Father Edwin V. O'Hara and his associates, and others will follow as soon as there is any chance of using them.

That Catholic parish organization could do much for the rural community is not a theory but a conclusion established by practical experience. Europe is dotted with convincing models, and there are hopeful beginnings in the United States. Generally speaking, however, Americans are not pouring enough thought and energy into the process. We believe that Catholics in attendance at state agricultural schools—and there are many such—could be organized into groups conscious of possibilities and necessities. We feel that it ought to prove impossible to organize a corps of trained lecturers on farm sociology to travel from one place to another, talking to farmers under the shadow of the Church about matters of importance. We are convinced, finally, that something like roots of Catholic culture could be imbedded in our landscape, to produce a flowering of corporate life that would express a new joy, a new high resolve. Because the leaders of the Catholic Rural Life Conference have been pioneers in this great labor, we salute them thankfully and with acclaim. It is all very well to talk of nature; but there is another side to nature—man and his destiny.

# THE CAMPAIGN CRYSTALLIZES

By CHARLES WILLIS THOMPSON

THE campaign has now reached the stage where it has assumed its permanent shape and won't change in any essentials. Every campaign has a form and character of its own, like a human being. There was an exception in 1904, when the Democratic candidate, Judge Parker, having determined on a campaign of silence, was over-persuaded by the clamor of his supporters into changing at the eleventh hour into a campaign of attack. But he was inexperienced and ignorant of politics, and could not make up for the lack by any powers inherent in himself, and so he cannot be called the exception that proves the rule.

The Democratic dependence is on attack and exposition, the Republican dependence is on silence and inertia. It was clear by the last week in September that this would be the line-up, and there will be no salient change in it. Each party has chosen wisely. Attack, or even aggressive defense, would be bad politics for the Republicans, for they have, this year, the unpopular side of the leading issues. These are farm relief, water power and prohibition. They have the unpopular side of farm relief in the doubtful states in the West, the unpopular side of prohibition in the doubtful states in the East, and the unpopular side of the water power question everywhere, but especially in the West. Their best strategy is therefore to hold the fortress, but to make no sallies; and under Mr. Hoover's leadership they are following it.

If the parties were evenly divided, such a strategy would be ruinous. What it finally comes down to is that the Republicans intend to win by a policy of inertia, by the fact that on the returns they have a reserve strength of about 4,000,000 votes, and that it makes no difference how badly they are hammered, how many breaches are made in the walls. They believe that nothing but a landslide can elect a Democrat, and they are sure that this year there will be no landslide. There are enough states that will desert the Democratic column to prevent that—southern states all, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee and Oklahoma, and Smith will not carry all the Republican states in the East that he counts on. So they believe; and therefore their strategy is to say as little as possible on the issues and trust to the strength of weight as against the Democratic strength of momentum.

Hoover determined on this strategy from the beginning, and he is running things; poor flustered Dr. Work is only there because there has to be a chairman, and because Hoover in this campaign, as in everything he does, runs everything himself, and needs only men who will obey. Hoover knew before the onset that he occupied a defensive position—not even that, a position in which the less defensive or offensive fighting there was done, the better. He has been criticized for

making hardly any speeches, and for making those few as unwarlike as possible, but it was in line with his strategy. It would be even better if he made no speeches at all, and he would prefer it. Many candidates, in the old days, followed exactly this course, and nobody thought the worse of them; the only reason he can't do it is that styles have changed and the Bryans, Roosevelts and Wilsons have made the public expect a thorough threshing out of the issues by the candidates.

The result is a warlike, militant Democracy attacking every issue and turning it inside out before the people; and a silent Republicanism, intent on holding fast its monumental millions of votes. The word "silent" is used relatively. There are as many Republican speakers as usual, and they all go through the motions of debating the issues; but, from Senator Borah down, they are just making conversation until the party is over and the guests are putting on their wraps. It is their strategy; it is Hoover's strategy, and it is good strategy, the only strategy they could adopt this year with profit. If Governor Lowden had been nominated, it would have been safe to adopt a different strategy, to fight on the issues; but as it is, Hoover has chosen wisely. I say Hoover rather than the Republican party because Hoover always makes his own plans and sees that they are carried out, and he is running true to form now.

The first rush of Smith dented and swayed the Republican lines and compelled a hasty reforming of them, but did not affect the fundamentals of Hoover's strategy, the strategy of inertia and dependence on the habit of voting Republican by those extra 4,000,000 voters. There was an appearance of confusion, but it was only such confusion as is created when an unexpected breach of the walls compels a hasty realignment of the garrisons. To take only one example, Hoover first determined to make his New York speech on October 17, then, because of the parlous conditions there, on October 13, then changed to October 22, and before this article gets into print will probably have made another reformation. This may look as if he were rattled, but only indicates that under the force of Smith's cavalry charge the Republican lines have reformed under fire. So, too, Senator Borah, directly after Smith's devastating western tour, canceled all his eastern engagements to devote himself exclusively to repairing damages in the West; and so, though this does not matter much, did Senator Fess.

Such a strategy does not inspire enthusiasm, and in fact there is no Republican enthusiasm this year. The enthusiasm is all among the Democrats, including the anti-Smith bolters in the South. But that does not mean that it is bad strategy; elections can be carried

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without enthusiasm and even when the party is sullen to the point of mutiny, as the Republican party certainly is in many states. The result always is, and will be now, if the Republicans win, a terrific explosion from the sullen as soon as the election is over, which sometimes wrecks the successful administration, and always paralyzes legislation, or at least ties it up to the detriment of business and of general prosperity. The second administration of Grover Cleveland is a case in point.

In his acceptance speech Hoover said he would discuss the issues fully, and added: "We shall use words to convey our meaning, not to hide it." It is the only thing he has said that indicated any intention to depart from the rules of this year's strategy, and it was not a wise intention of his. Fortunately neither he nor the others made any further break of that kind. Though Mr. Hoover does not talk—that is, when compared with candidates in the recent past—others do; but they discuss the issues with a lucidity exactly like that of Mrs. Micawber and Mrs. Nickleby. It will be remembered that though Mrs. Micawber's thoughts were not valuable, she always spoke with extreme lucidity and logic; and so Senator Borah, who a few months ago was all agog over the oil scandals and was proposing a conscience fund to return Harry Sinclair's bribe money, is now discussing them as an incident inextricably intertwined with the crimes of Boss Tweed in 1871—of historic interest, so to speak. Why bother about Fall and Sinclair when Tammany is—or was in 1871 and 1894—just as bad? he inquires.

While this may appear humorous, I am not citing it for that purpose. It is a concrete illustration. If it were possible to conduct the campaign without saying anything, without holding a single meeting, it would be done, for the wise Republican strategy is to stand mute behind the rampart of their 4,000,000 majority and to let the Democrats shoot. It was not their policy at some other times, or at any other time, but it is the right strategy in 1928. They are sure to lose hundreds of thousands of votes, but with 4,000,000 to spare they can take a lot of punishment and still live.

One qualification should be made. Those 4,000,000 extra votes are labeled Republican, but not all of them are Republican. In the last two elections, and in all the elections in which Bryan was a candidate, it was the habit of hundreds of thousands of Democrats and independents—perhaps millions, since there is no way of determining accurately—to vote the Republican ticket. So, when it was announced that a Republican President had 4,000,000 majority, it became a matter of official record that there were 4,000,000 more Republicans than there were Democrats, but this was not the case. Vast numbers of Democrats voted for Coolidge, Harding, Taft, Roosevelt and McKinley; not, though, for Hughes. In New York, four years ago, when Coolidge was running for President and Smith for governor, the stock saying all over the state was "I'm for Cal and Al."

This is the explanation of a phenomenon seldom seen in campaigns, which is that it is a one-candidate campaign. People everywhere are talking about Smith, not about Hoover. If this gives the impression that Hoover is a nonentity or a lightweight, it is a mistake; he will be heard from in no uncertain tones if he is elected, and he will be a President, not a piece of putty. Just now, though, it is the wise thing for him to keep as still as possible. The result is that his own partisans, like everybody else, are vehemently discussing, not the views of Hoover and Smith, but the views of Smith, as if Smith were running for President all by himself and the question were whether to make Smith President or not to give the Presidency to anybody.

As for the views of Smith, he has not left anybody in doubt about them. Neither has Robinson—a point worth mentioning, for though Curtis has made a good many speeches his policy is the same as Hoover's. If anybody doubts this, let him ask himself, without refreshing his memory from the record, what Curtis has been saying in his numerous speeches. Unless he was present at one of them himself, he will have a hard job remembering.

Smith has not only discussed the issues, but he has forced the public to fix its attention on any issue he chose to discuss. This is not new; he always did this in his five campaigns for governor of New York. None of his opponents adopted the present Hoover strategy; they all went after Smith, they all produced issues, some of them—Mills, for instance—aggressive issues. But Smith always made the public think of and discuss the issues he talked about. He is now introducing the nation to the experience New York state has had for ten changeless years. Smith's first western swing, it is somewhat bromidic to say, "introduced Smith to the nation"; but what it mainly did was to introduce the nation to a new kind of campaigning, the kind New York state has been familiar with ever since Governor Whitman, who had defeated other Democratic candidates easily, encountered Smith in 1918 and returned permanently to private life.

As one example, take the bigotry issue. In the whirl of a campaign everything becomes an old story in a week and it is impossible to put oneself back into the state of mind in which he was Thursday sennight. So it is hard to remember that before Smith's Oklahoma speech the bigotry question was taboo. It was known that it was a big element in the campaign and might swing the election; but it was accustomed to encounter not the shillelah but the soft pedal. So much has happened since, we cannot now believe that the Oklahoma speech extorted a groan of horror from Republicans and Democrats alike; that Smith was told by everybody he had ruined himself; that he was besieged by frantic Democrats begging him never again to touch the untouchable, speak the unspeakable. After which everybody suddenly began talking about the bigotry issue—but talking aloud, now; no longer in frightened sibilances after dark.

# THE DECLINE OF BERGSONISM

## I. IS MAN A MACHINE?

By HENRI MASSIS

*(This is one of two papers which are to appear in The Commonwealth on the present status of Bergsonism. In this week's article, M. Massis analyzes Bergson's positive and valuable work in invading the mechanistic dogma so heavily credited a generation ago. Next week the negative and destructive aspects of Bergsonism itself will be examined.—The Editors.)*

TO APPRECIATE the originality of Bergsonism, and the profound needs which it has been credited with satisfying, we must, at the very start, realize the philosophical poverty of modern culture. To understand the intoxication which has led men to expect anything and everything from a doctrine which aimed at nothing so little as giving human thought a new orientation, we have to realize how tragic are the alternatives between which philosophy has oscillated since Descartes, and, still more, since Kant.

While Cartesian rationalism was developing its most dangerous principle—namely, the conformity of the actual to ourselves instead of the conformity of self to the actual; and while the Kantian critique was condemning metaphysics to the sad and futile task of producing the objective from the subjective, material science was flaunting the practicality of its results. While thought was exhausting itself in destroying evidence, seeking some vain principle of equilibrium, veering from spiritualism to pantheism, and, at the end, admitting its inherent impotence, the same material science was offering the wide scale of its applications as proof that it, and it alone, possessed viable rules and the apparatus for arriving at certainty. Drunk with its own independence and deceptive autonomy, and after committing self-destruction by claiming to find reality in itself and nowhere else, human thought consented to accept matter as the sole reality, abdicated its reasoning faculty and agreed to recognize no other existence than that of accident and phenomenon. Upon this cowardly and comprehensive surrender positive science was able to erect its own throne. Henceforth the choice was plain—absolute scepticism or radical mechanism? Mechanism, there is hardly need to repeat, won the day.

As a result of its triumph, positive science imposed the harshest of servitudes upon the intelligence. It compelled it to wear the yoke of determinism—denied the principle of the being and of free will. Torn between irreconcilable critiques and despairing of itself, thought became incapable of reaction and resigned itself to a passive endurance of each outrage. This was the more fatally easy because materialism never imposed itself in the guise of a doctrine, but was satisfied to pervert the human conscience by stressing

the dazzling victories of science in the material sphere. From the moment materialism appeared as the inseparable condition of such triumphs, science, despised as theory, was accepted as fact, the more readily because a steady infiltration had been going on for years.

The intoxication which possessed the generation to which Renan preached the all-sufficiency of science, Darwin the origin of species and the descent of man, Paine the mechanism of the intelligence, could not remain indefinitely under such influences. Once its mechanistic orgy was over, thought awoke, realized its slavery and tasted its despair.

It was at this crisis that M. Henri Bergson super-vened. In an essay, *Time and Free Will*, deservedly famous, he demonstrated the utter inanity of the mechanistic solution. He perceived that physical science, far from probing the depths of reality, only furnished us with an image, more or less arbitrary, of certain of its aspects. He saw that so-called scientific positivism is only a clumsy agglomeration of metaphysical prejudices more or less subconscious. He showed that illusions entertained on so comprehensive a scale must cast discredit on the entire corpus of modern philosophy, and might even have, as their root cause, certain errors into which human intelligence is prone to fall.

Led on to seek the reality so disparaged by mechanism, M. Bergson found himself in the sphere of psychology. And suddenly, as the result of a profounder study of experience, he came to recognize the inherent insufficiency of the ideas entertained by scientists regarding the relation between the physical and moral worlds. To those who denied all distinction between body and soul, and who, in the name of science, deduced a rigorous parallelism between the life of the brain and the life of the spirit, Bergson demonstrated that they carried their conclusions far beyond anything the teachings of experience justified. When they did this, he roundly declared, they were no longer scientists. He told the materialists:

The doctrine you offer is nothing new to us. It comes from our own workshops, it is we philosophers who have fabricated it: its pedigree reaches back to the seventeenth century, and it was certainly not through a study of anatomy or the physical structure of the human brain (sciences which hardly existed at that epoch) nor through inquiry into nervous diseases, that men were introduced to your hypothesis. It has quite simply been resurrected from the general principles of a metaphysics conceived in order to give substance to early experiments in physical science. Discoveries made during the renaissance, those of Kepler and of Galileo, for instance, had shown the

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possibility of solving astronomical and physical problems by the same means as mechanical problems. Hence arose an idea that the universe in its totality, organized and unorganized, might be an immense machine subject to mathematical laws. From now on, living organisms in general, and the body of men in particular, were forced to take their place in this machine, like so many cog-wheels in a watch. Nothing existed that was not determined in advance and hence mathematically calculable.

From this premise proceeded the doctrine according to which mental life is only an aspect of cerebral life. It is not hard to understand why the wise men who philosophize today on the relation between the physical and psychical, base their arguments upon the hypothesis of parallelism. The metaphysicians have supplied them with nothing better. But when one of them tells us that this argument is a scientific one, and that it is experience which reveals this rigorous parallelism between cerebral and mental life, we cry halt! We retort: "Give us your doctrine for what it is. Do not try to make pass as a scientific resultant a theory molded on facts and capable of being remolded on them, a doctrine which even before the arrival of our physiology and psychology had assumed the perfect and definitive form by which metaphysical concepts are recognizable."

It is easy to imagine the sentiment of joy and liberation which this new doctrine aroused in innumerable minds. It robbed determinism of its basis in exact science. It relegated it to its true place among other metaphysical lumber, and in its place substituted a truly experimental psychology, which was to study the life of the soul in all its manifestations, and confine itself to what was observed. It declared, from the very start, that nothing was more thoroughly ascertained, nothing more evidently real, than the human conscience, and that intelligence and conscience are identical. From this it drew the conclusion that free will is a reality, that there is a distinction between spirit and

matter, that the soul is a substantial entity. Finally without leaving the terrain of experience, it established, if not the immortality of the soul, at least a strong probability of its survival. A doctrine which leaned so plausibly toward the recognition of a personal God gave space and air to spiritual misgivings, and led its disciples to the very threshold of the religious life. Souls exist who have been saved from atheism by the new doctrine and who have renewed the sources of their spiritual life at its wells.

Those who had vainly searched for an authentic thought in modern philosophy received something very like a revelation from Bergson's books. No one has described this sudden rapture better than M. Edouard Le Roy.

A veil had been interposed between the real and ourselves, enveloping us and everything else in the folds of illusion. It falls suddenly as though some enchantment had dissolved it. Abysses of light hitherto unsuspected open before the intelligence, in whose depths for the first time reality itself appears and may be contemplated face to face! . . . This is the impression received, with singular intensity, as the reader passes from one page of M. Bergson to another. . . . Nothing can do justice to this impression of an intimate and direct view of things. Everything one deemed he knew already is renewed, rejuvenated, as by the light of early morning. On every side, under the light of this new dawn, fresh intuitions take root and blossom, which one instinctively feels are rich in consequences and impregnated with life, and in every one of which, as it buds, he senses a sort of perennial fecundity.

Bergsonism, in short, acted upon souls afflicted with all the maladies of the contemporary mind as a counter-poison. A poison, none the less, which must be eliminated in its turn!

## TABLOIDS IN CHINA

By MARIE L. DARRACH

LESS than a decade ago nothing could have been more incongruous than a newspaper in the hands of a coolie in China. Today it is one of the arresting sights in every Chinese city. Ocular evidence that the work of the Chinese National Association of Mass Education is bearing fruit has been furnished to all those who have been in China recently, and astonishment that the lowest stratum of its population has been transformed into a reading public, for the first time in the history of this age-old country, colors the tales of every returning traveler.

And admiration for what has been accomplished is also voiced by every person who knew China before the establishment of the republic in 1911, when these laborers, who have been so surprisingly touched by the hand of literacy, were in actuality very little better than beasts of burden.

One learns that it is under the auspices of the National Association of Mass Education, operating from 800 centres throughout the country, that the instruction of 1,500,000 coolie students is being supervised. By a method so simple it is imposing, the Chinese peasants are learning to read their own language, and already an appreciable number of them are familiar with the printed page.

Ten years ago this system of mass education devised to give the Chinese peasantry some knowledge of their written words, was an experiment being tried out with the thousands of ignorant coolies doing menial service behind the lines in France during the world war. At that time it was merely a philanthropic effort to make life tolerable for these laborers, who seemed more miserable and degraded in the isolation created by their ignorance than the nationals of any other coun-

try. This charitable endeavor, carried on in the European trenches, has now become a great national movement in China which needs only financial assistance to make it the most successful crusade against illiteracy ever attempted in the Orient.

On revisiting China, one now finds the habits of his old coolie servitor completely changed as a result of his being able to read the morning paper. Quite in the fashion of the Occidental who is just achieving the fringe of literacy, he turns to it not so much as a source of information, as a new and delightful form of entertainment, and as an unfailing relief from ennui.

The rickshaw men in Peking were wont to pass the time, while their passengers were shopping or making calls, in quarreling among themselves. Their noisy arguments often ended in street riots, which involved all the innocent bystanders, as well as the person who had hired the rickshaw. One set of police was kept busy quieting the racket of these human aids to transportation, and another crew was on hand when it became necessary to drag them off to jail. Now you find them sitting silently on the curbstone, no matter how protracted your shopping or visiting session may have been. Nor are they in any hurry to be disturbed, so absorbed have they become in the scraps of newspaper over which they are constantly poring.

The tailor who arrives at your lodging to fit the suit he is making between steamers, has a folded newspaper sticking from the pocket of his long blue blouse. And if you keep him waiting long past the hour of your appointment, he no longer stretches himself across the threshold to sleep soundly till you arrive. Instead you discover him propped against the casement, wide awake, reading the morning paper.

Crossing on the Kowloon ferry from Hong Kong two bedraggled deck hands sag down against a coil of rope and point excitedly to some announcement in a row of smudgy ideographs on a slimy sheet of cheap white paper. And rotund nurses in the park at Macao now pay even less attention than usual to the black-eyed Portuguese babies in their care because they are so interested in the information which they are at last able to decipher in the up-and-down characters on the page of a newspaper.

On the corner of any crooked street in Canton a coolie will be seen squatting on a moss-grown flagstone beside a pile of papers. They are weighted down by a century-old tile, and the whole neighborhood is reminiscent of the middle-ages. But as the guide who is piloting you about passes by the newsboy, he exchanges his copper for one of the grimy sheets covered with hieroglyphics.

The task of teaching China's unlettered millions to read their own language had always been considered hopeless by native scholars and philanthropists. So foreign missionaries, in an effort to bring the light of literacy into their lives, labored for years to substitute English for the confusing medley of dialects, each with its thousands of different characters. Because of the

enormous number of ideographs in the Chinese language, it was absolutely impossible for an ignorant person to assemble a working vocabulary for reading purposes in the course of an ordinary lifetime. So it was only students or people with a great deal of time and unusual mental equipment who could ever hope to encompass the mysteries of the printed page.

The solution of the difficulty, as conceived by Mr. J. Y. C. Yen, a descendant of a long line of Confucian scholars as well as a graduate of Yale, was to reduce the number of Chinese characters to a minimum of accepted and recognized words. Then, with the coöperation of editors and authors, newspapers and books limited to this vocabulary could be published for circulation among the people who, from instruction, had been taught to recognize them. The problem then of lifting these Chinese peasants from the slough of illiteracy in which they were sunk, and in which their ancestors had been engulfed for generations, resolved itself into a matter of reducing the written language to the smallest number of words possible, and having the writing of books and newspapers intended for their use limited to these words. The first move was to prepare a lexicon of pictured words as simple and few in number as would give a workable vocabulary. A list of words was compiled reducing the Chinese ideographs to 1,000, which, with their compounds, numbered about 5,000. This carefully selected vocabulary was found sufficient for all practical purposes and the Thousand Character plan for the education of the masses was launched.

The Chinese language has no alphabet. Each simple word is a monosyllable, and is represented by a character. Each character is a single word and not a syllable as in Japanese, or a sound as in alphabetical languages. There is no spelling to complicate matters for the beginner. So recognition of the pictorial representation of objects constitutes an ability to read.

The teaching was to be undertaken by every educated Chinese who had a patriotic desire to see the submerged mass of the country's population raised to a level of literacy which would at least approximate that of the tabloid-reading public in America which, after all, ranks as an intelligent electorate.

The movement was started in the University of Peking. As soon as the lectures for the day were over the students became teachers, and men and women from the lowest stratum of China's economic life were invited into the class rooms to learn the Thousand Characters which would enable them to read.

Ignorant coolies swarmed to the national university from every quarter eager to discover the meaning of a thousand pictured words. Their education was considered finished when they had acquired a visual and lingual acquaintance with these characters. Each coolie, as he learned a dozen words or more, pledged himself to go out and teach at least one other person. Many schools and colleges followed the example of the University of Peking and students everywhere



rounded out their own day of study with several hours of instruction among the coolies who crowded about them to be taught the Thousand Characters. Chinese of wealth and leisure—both men and women—took up this teaching work as a private philanthropy, and every individual in a community capable of doing so, was encouraged to teach the Thousand Characters to at least one coolie. The idea spread like wildfire over the entire country, and in less than ten years literally millions of the peasant population of China have been added to its reading public. No popular endorsement of the nationalist party could be so significant of the awakening of China's unlettered masses as this establishment of a newspaper contact with the world for the first time in the history of the country.

That all these people with their recently acquired knowledge are reading current news instead of following the custom of students in the cultured classes of their own country, who from time immemorial have recognized only classic poems and the axioms of Confucius as the foundation of education, indicates that in this method of enlightening the masses, the ancient standards of the Orient have been abandoned for occidental ideas.

Aide from the astounding fact that the coolie class has actually learned to read and that these lowly laborers are drawing their own conclusions from what they see in their vernacular papers with an independence which startles foreigners who knew them in the days of the empire, there is also the interesting phase of the situation which has to do with the nature of the information they are getting from their reading.

It was inevitable that a special brand of news would be created for these kindergartners as soon as they became part of the reading public, and that the newspapers designed for circulation among them would be filled with all kinds of propaganda.

Much of the industrial unrest, and nearly all of the labor troubles which complicated affairs during the revolution last year, could be traced directly to the fact that newspapers had reached the masses in China for the first time. And because they were getting their distorted information from the printed page which was infinitely more convincing than it had ever been when they had received it by word of mouth, they accepted everything they read as gospel truth. And the more they could read, the greater trouble-breeders they became.

They saw in their papers that no worker had a lot so hard as that of the Chinese, who were oppressed by both the capitalists and the imperialists. They learned that the property of corrupt officials and foreigners was to be seized and the proceeds used by the Chinese Relief Society to aid the poor. This was a communistic society organized in Shanghai by the Russian reds, and was pictured always in the newspapers as a great treasury filled with the confiscated gold of the enemies of China's proletariat, which was to be used later for their benefit. Both of these

statements, which appeared in thousands of papers, started any number of factory workers on the rampage. And while it is always possible that the communists may reach the masses through the medium of the papers now printed in the Thousand Characters and incite the laboring classes to revolt, it is nevertheless conceded that the good that will eventually accrue to the country from so many of them having been taught to read, out-balances even this danger.

Even when you learn that the coolie is reading sensational claptrap, and that the knowledge he is receiving through the medium of his newspaper is a poor substitute for even his former ignorance, you have the conviction that all these people, who have been virtually outcasts since they were born, have gained enormously in self-respect because they are suddenly able to read the newspapers.

This mental straightening up of millions of her degraded, poverty-stricken peasants is bound to be of incalculable value in the creation of the new China of which Dr. Sun Yat Sen dreamed, and which is bound to materialize sometime—no matter how far distant the date may be.

The Chinese papers in the vernacular now edited and published for the proletariat are numerous in all large towns, and each copy is passed around and read by about forty people. They are nearly all circulated through street sales, and many of them are owned by Japanese. The Chinese of the lower classes, like the ignorant of all other nations, are keen for sensation, and their papers are filled with lurid stories. And inserted cleverly between these startling tales are items of propaganda, often of a very disturbing nature.

In other papers published in the interest of agitators and communistic societies, they are furnished with slogans to shout at labor meetings or any occasion when foreigners or imperialists are to be denounced. During the trouble last year they were able to read for themselves, for the first time in their lives, that the revolutionists would abolish all oppression and were working for the benefit of the laborers, students and merchants. But all news of reverses of the nationalist army, defeats of the communist troops, executions of brigands or arrests of radical leaders was suppressed. On the other hand, exploits of labor agitators, soap-box orators and the bombastic demands of unions were played up. As might have been expected, many disturbances resulted in Shanghai because of the circulation of these garbled reports.

But if a stable government is established now, following the decisive victories of the nationalists, there is no reason why the state cannot make valuable use of these vernacular newspapers printed in the Thousand Characters, to instruct millions of the coolie population as to what they may expect under the new régime, and to secure coöperation from the masses through a medium which has never been available to any party in power in Peking before.

# FOR THE NEW YORK WORLD

By MICHAEL WILLIAMS

**T**HE NEW YORK WORLD is our favorite daily paper, because its editorial pages are so well written, and particularly because its good writing is the result of high and generous ideals (in some things) sensitive sympathy for the poor, and for the victims of social injustice (again in a limited sense) and, finally, because, if you can grant the premises of a New York World editorial, and if you can believe that the facts it uses in its arguments are true, its logical, clear thinking is wholly admirable. And these conditions of argument with the World are often fulfilled.

For these reasons, the disagreeable shock we received when we read its editorial of October 6, entitled, *For the Catholic Press*, was keener and stronger than if we had read the same thing in some paper less distinguished for its sense of justice and its crusading spirit. We reproduce it in full:

This would be an excellent season of the year for the leaders of Catholic thought in the United States to begin asking themselves whether the time has not come for approaching Mexican questions in a somewhat more objective and magnanimous spirit. So far as we know, the responsible Catholic papers in this country have never, for example, undertaken to deny the senseless slander sponsored by the *Osservatore Romano* that President Calles was responsible for the murder of General Obregon. They must know by this time that there never was one scintilla of evidence to justify that cruel charge. From the point of view of the facts, of charity and of fair play the accusation is on all fours with the worst rubbish now being put forth by the Fellowship Forum for the Ku Klux Klan and by the Methodist Board of Temperance and Morals. Granted that President Calles is an opponent of the Mexican episcopate and the Catholic Church in Mexico, the obligation remains to clear him on the charge of a despicable and treacherous crime of which he is wholly innocent.

It is our conviction that those who fight for tolerance must themselves display it. That is why we take this occasion when we are engaged in the greatest battle ever fought on American soil for tolerance to plead that the Catholic press of this country should deal with the government of our neighbor Mexico truthfully and magnanimously. When so intelligent a journal as *The Commonwealth* continues at this date to describe the policy of the Mexican Government as "Communist" (October 3, 1928) the necessity for this plea is manifest.

The Commonwealth does not and never can presume to speak for the Catholic Church, or for the Catholic press as a whole. It can only speak for itself. And for itself it says:

We deny the right of the New York World to read a lesson to *The Commonwealth* as to its handling of the awful tragedy, the social catastrophe, the grim

warning to civilization, which is Mexico today. The Commonwealth believes that it is in a better position to form accurate opinions on that subject than the New York World, and for a simple yet sufficient reason: it is better informed. As Mr. William Flewellyn Saunders has pointed out (*The Commonwealth*, September 12), the secular press of the United States has badly, lamentably, failed in its news-handling of the Mexican situation. Without any apparent objection, and certainly without any effort to change the conditions under which it has been working, it has submitted to an almost absolute censorship imposed by the Calles government—a censorship which, as Mr. Saunders proves, is in direct violation of the so-called constitution of Mexico: a constitution imposed by a small junta of dictators who seized the military power of Mexico and used it ruthlessly and unscrupulously to maintain their grasp upon the country.

The correspondents maintained by the American secular press in Mexico are promptly banished from the country whenever one of them, or the paper he represents, offends the chief dictator or one of his satellites. Two correspondents of great newspapers in the United States gave Mr. Saunders letters to their editors to post in New York which they were afraid to put into the mail. The press of Mexico City itself, from whose pages the American correspondents derive what information they can in addition to the "official bulletins" placed in their hands by the government, is muzzled just as effectively as the Russian government controls its own press, or as Mussolini controls the press of Italy. What Mr. Saunders has to say on this subject is well known, and has more than once been publicly stated, by many other competent observers. And Mr. Saunders is not a correspondent of the New York press—his articles were bought and paid for by *The Commonwealth* because of the high value of their independent testimony to what is going on beyond the Rio Grande, behind the veil of censorship which the American press for years has permitted to obscure the knowledge of the American people as to the facts about Mexico.

Mr. Saunders was for several years secretary of the American Chamber of Commerce in the City of Mexico, prior to which he had been secretary of the St. Louis Business Men's League and the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce, and during the war manager of the Missouri Council of Defense. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that he is a Methodist, the son of a Methodist clergyman and prominent in the ranks of Masonry. He is one of the hundreds of practical American business men who have a first-hand acquaintance with the Mexican situation, and who do not form their opinions upon an exclusive diet of the



absolutely one-sided propaganda put forth by the clever gentlemen who do this business so effectively for the Calles oligarchy.

Such facts as do filter through the barrier of censorship into the secular press are of course at the disposal of *The Commonwealth* as well as the daily newspapers. In addition, it reads the information sent to the Catholic press by the News Service of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, a news agency whose representatives sit in the press gallery of Congress in Washington because the N. C. W. C. fully satisfied the strict requirements of the committee of correspondents who guard those press seats against the presence of propagandists. The N. C. W. C. News Service, and *The Commonwealth* itself, have been in touch for years, through correspondence and interviews, with men and women who know the truth which the censorship prevents the daily press from publishing, particularly the truth in regard to the outrageous tyranny imposed by the Calles oligarchy over Mexican Catholics.

For the *Osservatore Romano*, the semi-official organ of the Vatican, which, as the apostolic delegate in Washington recently pointed out, possesses and exercises the right to publish its own independent views in addition to being the medium for the publication of the official bulletins of the Vatican, *The Commonwealth* disclaims all responsibility. What it said concerning the possible complicity of Calles in the murder of Obregon was its own affair, based, no doubt, upon a great deal of information which reaches Rome, despite the censorship, although it does not seem to reach Park Row—at least if it does, it stops there and does not penetrate to the great world outside the office of the *New York World*. Certainly, remembering the rebuke which the *New York World* delivered to Calles when he used all the resources of his presidential power to fasten the stigma of Obregon's murder upon the Catholic Church as a body, we do not hesitate to affirm that the *Osservatore Romano* had fully as much right to accuse Calles as Calles had to accuse the Catholic Church. When such ardent defenders, on the whole, of Calles and his so-called revolution as Ernest Gruening and Carleton Beales can directly accuse members of the Calles oligarchy like Morones and Roberto Cruz, former chief of police of Mexico City, of being implicated in political murders and the unlawful doing to death of Father Pro Juarez, and when we recall countless incidents of brutal assassinations, imprisonment, exile, fines, against the persons and the civil and religious rights of thousands of Mexican men and women, we have no sympathy to waste upon Plutarco Elias Calles. He has sown the wind, and if so far he has escaped the whirlwind of retribution, the blowing of a little cold air of criticism against that none too sensitive gentleman by the *Osservatore Romano* does not disturb us; but, in any case, the *New York World's* quarrel is with our Roman contemporary, and certainly not with *The Commonwealth*. This paper on all occasions has depre-

cated and opposed any suggestions, no matter from what source they emanated, that the Mexican muddle should be interfered with by this country in any military or even civil intervention. We have supported in good faith the attempts of Ambassador Morrow to reach some acceptable solution of the frightful muddle. Remembering also the official accusations leveled against Calles and his oligarchy by the Secretary of State of the United States, Mr. Kellogg, and certain utterances of President Coolidge himself, made before Mr. Morrow was sent to Mexico, our comparatively mild reference to the "communistic" tendencies of Calles and his mis-government leave us free from any disposition to apologize.

We said that Mexico is suffering from the aftermath of a "communistic" policy, and we may as well marshal in support of this statement a few pertinent facts. First, representatives of the Calles government have said to many American visitors, some of them members of the groups organized by Dr. Herring, that the reason for enforcing the provisions against religion in the constitution of 1917 was that the Church would never countenance the social program of the government because the Church insisted upon respect for property rights. Second, the Mexican schools have used text-books and other material to pass on definitely communistic heroes and points of view to children. We have from time to time printed samples of this propaganda. Third, the Calles government has sponsored, as the greatest of its issues, the organization of several thousand Indian villages on a basis of communal ownership and operation of lands. No family can acquire any right to a part of this soil, and the machinery of production and distribution is vested in committees. This fact is so well known and has been announced by the Mexican government so frequently that one is surprised to find that the *World* has apparently lived in ignorance of it. Finally, openly communistic governments have been set up in various Mexican states by men who later came to occupy positions of prominence in the Mexican national government.

As for the assumption on the part of the *New York World* that because there is going on in the United States a great struggle for religious tolerance, in which such papers as the Fellowship Forum, and the Methodist Board of Temperance and Morals, and a large number of other organs and organizations are attempting to deny to American Catholics those civil rights which have been swept away by a storm of blood from the Mexican Catholics, "so intelligent a journal as *The Commonwealth*" should realize that the time has come "for approaching Mexican questions in a somewhat more objective and magnanimous spirit," we say, very emphatically, "Yes, we agree." But we must immediately add: "It is for the secular press, perhaps rather particularly for the *New York World*, to display a more objective and magnanimous spirit in handling the news of Mexico. Our secular contem-

poraries should cease to judge the present Mexican government almost solely by the standard set up by the Mexican government itself in the many eloquent and rather splendid proclamations of its noble, democratic and humanistic motives and actions, which proclamations are belied by its conduct of affairs, in especial by its ruthless and savage persecution of its Catholic subjects.

These same Catholics of Mexico, through their authorized spokesmen, ask for nothing more than, and we believe they should be content with nothing less than, the same conditions of freedom which have prevailed in the United States until now, and which no doubt will continue to prevail in spite of the tempest of intolerance now raging—against which the New York World has so valiantly and effectively struggled.

The Commonweal—and here it believes it voices the common opinion of other Catholic papers—feels that only the secular press can properly inform the American people of the facts concerning Mexico. The Catholic press publishes the facts, but for the most part what it has to say only reaches its own people. The secular press does not seem willing to publish facts, even when those facts do not come from their threatened correspondents in Mexico. Both Liberty and the Saturday Evening Post were barred from the mails in Mexico because of a few articles published by them which revealed facts and conditions that the Mexican oligarchy does not desire the outside world to know.

But The Commonweal would ask the New York World, and incidentally many other great American newspapers and news-gathering organizations, this question: Why do you not send and keep on sending qualified correspondents to Mexico, men who know something about the background of Mexican history, men who know the Spanish language, and men who will not be content to sit in front of cafés in Mexico City and rewrite the official bulletins and the castrated accounts of Mexican affairs published by the muzzled Mexican press? If such correspondents were promptly hurried out of Mexico, or even if a few of them were shot, such dangers at one time would not have frightened the American press. Not until the secular press has done its duty simply of reporting the news of Mexico will the editorial writers of the New York World be qualified to rebuke The Commonweal, or any other Catholic paper, for expressing opinions about Mexico which are based on ampler information than that published by the secular press. Conditions in Mexico constitute a possible menace to the United States and its civilization, which is rendered graver by the suppression of the facts. It is as if there existed in our midst a widespread epidemic of plague which the public was not allowed to know about because some group of physicians false to their trust, and undertakers reaping a profit, were in control of the situation, and imposed the censorship upon it.

## COMMUNICATIONS

### THE NEW MINUTE MEN

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor:—Your letter of October 4 has been read with the attention which its subject-matter demands. At this period of the university year the pressure upon my time and thought is so constant and so compelling that I may not judiciously accept invitations to make additional public addresses, however important the topic or the occasion may chance to be.

Nevertheless, I will take occasion to record the fact that no one who loves his country and who has any comprehension of the intellectual and spiritual foundations on which it rests can be otherwise than deeply moved and profoundly shocked by the widespread exhibitions of ignorance, intolerance and religious bigotry manifested on every side. Men and women who continue to call themselves Christians, at their head great companies of those who for some inscrutable reason feel they have been divinely appointed to preach the gospel of Christ, are betraying that Lord and Master as truly as did Judas and denying Him as truly as did Peter. Men and women who with calm effrontery continue to call themselves followers of Thomas Jefferson and believers in his political doctrines, are daily contradicting by voice, by pen and by deed the most fundamental of all the principles which that great philosopher taught. The lesson of Roger Williams goes unheeded, and the fine history of the free state of Maryland is passed by as if it had never existed. Perhaps they have not even heard that the original charter of my own university, written a generation earlier than the constitution of the United States, provides that the powers of its governors "do not extend to exclude any person of any religious denomination whatever from equal liberty and advantage of education or from any of the degrees, liberties, privileges, benefits or immunities of the said college on account of his particular tenets in matters of religion."

To what a pass has the nation come when millions of those who have passed through the common schools, and many of them also through institutions of higher education, are still the willing weapons of a religious hate and a malice that are as immoral as they are un-Christian and anti-American! Does all this mean that somewhere in the not distant future another Gibbon is preparing a world-shaking work on the Decline and Fall of Christianity?

It is the duty of every one of us, without any regard whatever to party affiliation, to stamp upon this invading snake with iron heel. This is far more important than to protect material prosperity, which happens not to be at stake, or to provide economic relief for particular groups and sections, or even than to drive out of the constitution of the United States that enemy of civil liberty, public morality and social order which was forced into it eight years ago. If the very foundations of America be undermined or shaken, then we and our children shall have nothing left on which to build.

What a travesty it is on our much-vaunted progress that in this year of grace, nineteen hundred and twenty-eight, we should see repeating on a gigantic scale the worst practices of the Spanish Inquisition, of the Puritan persecutors and of the witch hunters, all of which we had fondly supposed to belong to an almost forgotten past!

The foundations of America are under attack. A vast army of straight-thinking, fine-feeling, broad-minded, liberal men and women should spring to their defense in a way that will



make their complete and permanent defense both quick and secure. This is no time for cowards, time-servers, legalistic word-splitters or "Well, now's."

NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER,  
*President of Columbia University.*

(The above letter from Dr. Butler was written in response to the one which follows, from the editor of *The Commonwealth*.—The Editors.)

New York, N. Y.

DEAR Doctor Butler:—I thank you for your letter of October 3. That you are profoundly interested in trying to raise the level of public opinion in this country to a plane where religious bigotry and intolerance will disappear is, of course, well known. I also appreciate the fact that your many undertakings make it difficult for you to promise any public address on that subject. At the same time, public opinion on this matter at present seems to me to be greatly agitated, and urgently requiring—if I may use a comparison borrowed from chemistry—an agent to precipitate and crystallize the movement of opinion. And again I must urge my belief that you, above all other men, could perform this great public service. I am enclosing one of the many letters I am receiving from men and women to whom the tentative plan for the organization of a league of religious liberty has been submitted for their consideration, calling your attention to the remarkable incident chronicled by its writer.

Since you are good enough to ask me for a definite proposal in regard to your utterance, I would suggest that you undertake a perhaps less onerous task than the preparation and delivery of a public address, yet one which would be equally effective in reaching the public, namely, a letter in reply to this, to be published in *The Commonwealth*, and released simultaneously to all the news agencies and chief daily newspapers, which undoubtedly would treat such an utterance as they did in the case of your letter on prohibition. Specifically, *The Commonwealth* asks your opinion as to the necessity and the expediency of the formation of the proposed league for religious liberty. I enclose a copy of the tentative plan in case the one already sent to you is filed, or unavailable.

MICHAEL WILLIAMS,  
*Editor, The Commonwealth.*

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor:—In its purpose and personnel I am profoundly in sympathy with the proposed movement set out in your undated circular which discovers in the instant time its completest justification.

Some years ago I was present at a banquet, where among others of the speakers, there had foregathered Dr. Butler, a warm friend of mine, and Governor Smith, whom it is also my privilege personally to know. The occasion was in celebration of the birth of Thomas Jefferson. In the course of Dr. Butler's address, looking directly and earnestly at Governor Smith, the while conveying forcibly his thoughts to his audience, the former said that the work of Alexander Hamilton, whom the Republican party claimed as its earliest and most distinguished leader, had placed the country under obligations that never adequately could be discharged. Dr. Butler then particularized, covering ground which all readers of history and of the erection of our constitutional government appreciate and understand. He then added that the work of Hamilton had been completed, but that the most insistent demand upon the

loyal and sincere citizenry of this country was to preach again and then again the doctrines of Thomas Jefferson, which were seriously imperiled, and to renew and revitalize those principles of personal liberty and religious tolerance for which this distinguished nation-builder had so conspicuously and consistently stood. In conclusion and with great earnestness, specifically addressing himself to the Governor, Dr. Butler said: "Governor Smith, you are about to leave this banquet hall to attend the anniversary that is, concurrently with our own, being celebrated at the Democratic Club. I shall not therefore attempt to detain you, but I charge you, Sir, to tell your fellow-Democrats that we need again to learn the doctrines of Thomas Jefferson and to defend the principles of which he was the great protagonist. No more vital duty exists at the present time than to reaffirm and to reestablish those great principles of personal liberty and religious tolerance when they are menaced."

Curious to learn exactly how and in what measure Governor Smith would carry the message, I attended, shortly thereafter, the Democratic Club, there to hear the Governor deliver the message, not only in the exact words of Dr. Butler, but with the same firm, convincing spirit.

All this by way of proem to assure you, if assurance be necessary, that irrespective of my faith and independent of my religious traditions, I firmly believe that if the spirit of religious bigotry is permitted to exist, whereby any office of the people is foreclosed to the individual by reason of his faith, the very foundations of constitutional government will be destroyed. In whatever way, therefore, I may prove of service, I am yours to command.

JOHN VERNON BOUVIER, JR.

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor:—I highly appreciate your invitation of September 13 to attend the dinner at the Metropolitan Club on Tuesday evening, September 18, and keenly regret that departure for Canada on Sunday morning will deprive me of this pleasure.

I sympathize heartily with the movement in which you are engaged.

LOUIS WILEY,  
*Business Manager, the New York Times.*

#### SOME TELEGRAMS

New York, N. Y.

Referring your letter September 13, I am heartily in sympathy with the proposed activities of the Calvert Associates. I regret it will be impossible for me to attend the dinner Tuesday evening as various activities of this character demand so much time that I cannot accept membership on your committee.

CHARLES H. SABIN,  
*Chairman of Board, Guaranty Trust Company.*

Petersham, Mass.

Funeral in family prevents my being with you, but I earnestly sympathize in your purpose and think religious tolerance is the most important domestic issue in the election.

NORMAN HAPGOOD.

New York, N. Y.

Regret exceedingly previous appointment prevents attendance at dinner. Heartily approve and endorse your movement.

HOWARD CULLMAN,  
*(President, Beekman Street Hospital.)*

## WRITERS' SAINTS

Rome, Italy.

TO the Editor:—Your article on Writers' Saints, in the August 22 number of *The Commonweal*, spoke of certain saints "who are almost complete strangers in our literature," and named Saint Philip Neri. It may interest your readers who know French to learn of a very fine new life just published, *Saint Philippe Neri et la Société Romaine des Sou Temps*, by Ponnelle and Bordet, a book of absorbing interest, perhaps the first to be based on extensive historical researches and not on the "acts" of his process of canonization.

Of all the great saints, Saint Philip is the least known by the world at large, and yet his rôle in the Church is more important than most people realize.

It would have availed little for Saint Ignatius (his friend and contemporary) to carry the Roman faith to the four corners of the world if Saint Philip had not, almost single-handed, changed the character of Rome itself. One has only to read the tales of the Rome he found and the Rome he left, and of the later Popes and cardinals, the finest of whom were his devoted disciples—Federigo Borromeo, Cusano, Baronius, etc.—to realize what his influence was, and perhaps only the Romans know how the best Roman spirit of devotion even today is largely Philippine in its characteristics.

Another fine saint's life is *Saint Grégoire le Grand* by Monsignor Batiffol, a beautiful and moving picture of one of the greatest Popes, who was also the most Roman, and whose qualities of order, clarity, common sense and inspired spirituality stand out luminously against his troubled time.

A ROMAN READER.

## ANGLO-SAXONS AND OTHERS

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor:—A man must have his bump of credulity highly developed when, Bardsley or no Bardsley, he can be led to believe that names like Burke, Connelly, Conner, Larkin, Farley and Haley are English. What if they have been found in England before the seventeenth century? Is Ireland so far away from England? Have Irish people not been residing in England, as well as Scotland, from a period long antedating the arrival of the first Anglo-Saxon immigrant? Where did the missionaries who converted these Anglo-Saxon immigrants come from? And what if Bardsley does give the English etymology of these surnames? Have not other English authors proved conclusively that representative government, law, order, liberty, the four cardinal virtues and civilization and humanity in general are all sprung from certain celebrated germs which the mediaeval Anglo-Saxon carried about with him, unknown to the rest of the world?

Your correspondent, Rufus S. Tucker, tells us that the Scotch-Irish and the so-called Irish in the United States in the eighteenth century are "nearly all" "known" to be Scotch Presbyterians from Ulster. The chief thing that is clearly known in this connection is that there has been a lot of propaganda among American historians of a certain type to establish that stupid impression. How can anyone close his eyes to the evidence Dr. Walsh presented? And has Mr. Tucker ever had his eyes opened to the fact, of which the evidence is easily available, that Scotland is a historic Irish province, and that the anti-Irish Scotchman is simply an emigrant renegade Gael or Irishman?

BENEDICT FITZPATRICK.

## THE PLAY

By R. DANA SKINNER

*When Crummles Played*

CHARLES L. WAGNER is presenting a company of English players at the Garrick Theatre this year—an event which ought to bring joy to the super-sensitive ears of Mr. St. John Ervine, the new critic of the *New York World*. Mr. Ervine's special mission seems to be the correction of the voices and accents of American actors.

The first bill of these Garrick Players is called *When Crummles Played*, and is described on the program as "a satirical picture of Mr. Vincent Crummles's Company of Players, adapted from Charles Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby*, and of their performance of the then famous play, *George Barnwell*, or *The London Merchant*, at the Theatre Royal, Portsmouth, England, in 1827." If all this strikes you as a bit complicated, you can simply summon before your mind a prologue in which *Nicholas Nickleby* meets Mr. Vincent Crummles and his company, followed by a play in which you see Mr. Crummles enacting a moral little melodrama about a young merchant who falls before a London temptress, commits murder and is hanged for his crime. If your imagination is still vigorous, you can also picture for yourself the way Crummles and his troupe would play such a piece. The whole evening has much of the same spirit as that which the Provincetown group injected into their revival of *Fashion* a few years back.

The prologue is a rather deadly bit, by fault of its unnecessary length and much irrelevant talk. Thereafter the spirit of the occasion becomes livelier, and before all the gentle absurdities are over, you find you have had a thoroughly delightful evening's entertainment. If you saw and liked *Fashion*, then by all means see *Crummles*. It is a first-rate bit of theatrical spoofing, in which the players themselves are obviously having a hilarious time, and in which the expertness of their acting fairly glows with satirical restraint.

One of the most absurd reviews I have read of this performance spoke hopefully of the next production in which these actors would have a real chance to show their ability. That reviewer evidently knew nothing about acting, or he would have realized that a gentle burlesque of bad acting is a greater test of the fine actor's art than almost any other task. Take, for example, the work of Hugh Miller as Master Crummles in the prologue and as *George Barnwell* in the play. As a technician, Mr. Miller probably has more of the quality of *George Arliss* than any English actor on our stage. His portrait of Alfred Jingle in last year's production of *Pickwick* was one of the outstanding performances of the season. I mention it now because no one who saw him then, and forgot to look at the program, could possibly identify him with the mincing *George Barnwell* of this year. Mr. Miller is the farthest thing from a personality actor—and in this differs essentially from *Arliss*. But he has the same sureness of touch, the same infallible instinct for technical effect, and the same ability to make a carefully studied job appear to spring forth with spontaneous ease. Just because he is willing to sink his own personality completely in a part, he may never reach the matinee popularity of *Arliss*. On the other hand, his greater versatility is sure to bring delight to observant and critical audiences.

Halliwell Hobbes has less opportunity than Mr. Miller in the rather thankless part of *Crummles*. It seemed to me his work was unnecessarily soft and lacking in the fine edge of



distinction. But it was more than adequate, and with Nell Carter as Mrs. Vincent Crummles (the London temptress of the play) and Maureen O'Moor as Miss Ninetta Crummles (the lovelorn maiden of the play) the sum total of the evening's work was delightful. If you want (as I hope you do) a wholly refreshing change from the current obscenities and literalism of Broadway, you have merely to drop in at the Garrick Theatre.

### *The New Moon*

LAST week I indulged in an explosion. It was all about the crass stupidity of managers who failed to see the opportunity at their doorstep in the way of finely romantic plays. Half an hour after this explosion, I dropped in at the Imperial Theatre and saw *The New Moon*. And now I wish to record that Laurence Schwab and Frank Mandel have done precisely what I hoped someone would do. They have taken a romantic story from old French New Orleans of 1788, and turned it into one of the most utterly engaging light operas of many seasons.

The managers themselves wrote the book with Oscar Hammerstein 2nd, had Sigmund Romberg write the music, and Donald Oenslager design the settings. There are, to be frank, a few dull moments. The book is a trifle too long, and a few of the chorus evolutions could be eliminated to the advantage of the story. But those are details. The interesting point is that the story is strong enough, dramatically, to make one resent the chorus—the exact reverse of most musical plays. The entire performance has that thing which is the birthright of all good theatre—glamour. You find it in the delightful costumes. You find it in the lilting and romantic music. You find it in the fresh enthusiasm of the players. You find it in the absence of current smut and in the exuberant fun of the comedy.

Robert Halliday and Evelyn Herbert for the romance, Marie Callahan and Gus Shy for the comedy, and William O'Neal for the robust action—there you have an excellent combination to start with, and for good measure you can add Esther Howard for more comedy and Rosita and Ramon for glamorous dancing. No one in the cast really merits superlatives. Neither does the music by itself, nor the book, nor the staging. But the combination of all the elements is so well balanced, the spirit of the production is so pleasantly obvious, and the overtone so constant, that you would have to search far to find the best magic of the theatre better expressed. *The New Moon* is not exactly a work of art, but it is most emphatically a work of theatrical distinction.

### *Billie*

GEORGE M. COHAN'S latest musical play—based on his farce, *Broadway Jones*—has plenty of charm and innocence and innocuous humor and fair to middling music without in any way giving forth the glamour of *The New Moon*. You must simply take it for what it is—a typical Cohan show—and resign yourself to enjoying it in a highly uncritical and relaxed mood. If you do that, you will have a good time. If you expect more, you will be disappointed and a trifle bored. In other words, make sure of your mood first. *Billie* will not force its own mood on you.

A great deal of the mild charm of this offering at Erlanger's Theatre comes from the sympathetic work of Joseph Wagstaff as Jackson Jones and Polly Walker as *Billie*. I notice that Mr. Ervine forecasts qualities of genius for Polly Walker, and

even concedes her a pleasant speaking voice, with the important reservation that she pronounces the word sentiment as if it were spelled sent-a-ment! How Mr. Ervine must suffer from his ears! In this case, they must have played him a bad trick and distracted his eyes from one glaring fault of Miss Walker's work—a naïveté which is so studied as to become self-conscious and a lack of variety in approach which, as the evening progresses, becomes distinctly monotonous. To me that is more important than her exact pronunciation. It seems to deny implications of genius in her work. But it does not deny a real charm. It merely means that a charm which captivates for half an hour may wear a little thin after two hours and a half, and may reveal itself as being not quite spontaneous. Mr. Wagstaff, on the other hand, has enough internal vigor to keep his part going right up to the last curtain. If I seem to condemn *Billie* with faint praise, it is merely that I enjoyed *The New Moon* so much more. *Billie* is really very decent and engaging entertainment and in the best Cohan tradition. Some day we shall really appreciate just how much the American theatre owes to Mr. Cohan.

### *Possession*

THIS play at the Booth Theatre, written, presented and staged by Edgar Selwyn, is a queer hodge-podge of uncooked ideas, struggling at times toward farce, at other times toward melodrama, and at still others toward the qualities of a problem play. Were it not for some very exceptional acting by Margaret Lawrence, Edna Hibbard, Walter Connolly, Robert Montgomery and Joseph Baird, the play would lose all semblance of importance.

Briefly, it tells of Stanley Whiteman's desertion of his possessive and fussily mothering wife for a more understanding companion, and of Anne Whiteman's hysterical, frantic and ultimately victorious efforts to bring him back to her particular form of bondage. Mr. Selwyn never seems quite sure just what any of his characters are really like. Act by act, their motives are reasonably clear, but from act to act they change so completely as to leave one bewildered. There are deep hints that Stanley's new companion is worse than Anne—but the case is never proved. There are also hints that he returns to Anne because she is simply too strong a character for him to resist. Yet, as the play actually runs, he makes his final decision only after an appeal from his son, in which the latter intimates that a divorce scandal would injure his (the son's) chances in life. Only one thing is really clear, and that is that no one does anything as a matter of principle. They are all selfish, all self-seeking, and all tossed hither and thither by the emotional winds of the moment. The only redeeming feature is the acting, and even that is only a sad commentary on the fact that so fine a group of actors must work with such meagre and messed-up material.

### *The Rose Jar*

Blown petals, spiced and dead  
As Egypt's kings  
Within the pyramid.  
Frail things,  
Red roses, prisoned in a jar!  
I lift the lid  
And the pale ghosts of June  
Wandered, bewildered,  
In my autumnal room.

EVANGELINE CHAPMAN COZZENS.

## P O E M S

*Ave Roma!*

Tourists throwing their coppers into the Trevi fountain,  
Lest they should not come back to Rome the beloved,  
Lest they should not see again that other fountain—  
Near to the strange ancient church of Santa Susanna—  
Whose mild sleek Byzantine lions spout the bright water:  
Lest they should not behold once more the Coliseum  
Tragic by moonlight,  
And a vast dome, floating, floating in amber skies,  
And the strong-armed sibyls in the Sistine Chapel  
Wide-eyed on huge adytums above the dark cosmos.

But what of that other Rome, what coin of mintage unearthly  
Waits to be cast in some ethereal fountain,  
Lest I should not return to hear a faint lullaby  
Echoing in the catacombs, "Sleep in Christ, sweet Lucullus!"  
Lest I should not see the rough-hewn Christ by the wayside,  
Hear the voice of the wandering Christ through the ages,  
Behold on the Seven Hills the Miracle of Bolsena!  
What of the City of God rising in the dreams of Augustine?  
Where is its coin? From what mints unearthly, untreasured?  
Where the ethereal fountain?

ANNA McCLURE SHOLL.

*Minstrel's Lament**(After the Irish)*

The songs are gone from me  
As ripples from water,  
My heart is left lonely,  
The days pass me by  
With never a glimpse  
Of the bird with a bright wing  
That once flew above me  
In full summer sky.

The thin winds of autumn  
Come down from the mountain,  
The wide wings of darkness  
Will fold me in soon,  
I go silent now  
To the places that knew me  
When song was my heart's joy,  
When life was at noon.

LORETTA ROCHE.

*The Church*

As tired children, when the dusk falls sadly,  
Turn weary feet toward the shining lights of home,  
So to thy tenderness our hearts turn gladly  
As to thy arms we come.

Outside thy doors is tumult and confusion,  
Within thy walls alone is peace and rest,  
As in the silence of thy still seclusion  
We seek thy breast.

MARY ATWATER TAYLOR.

*Kakemono*

On a lost lake by a pinewood lies our canoe with wings,  
Red and blue and gold feathers, with iridescent rings;

It lies in tideless cold water, still, still, deep,  
And a single heron watches by it, tall, asleep.

Wild geese high in a black arrow from the shore  
Sharp against a lone star pause forevermore;

Nothing turns the hour there; the moon of those skies,  
Moveless by a still cloud, cannot sink or rise;

Never can its wind lift, nothing move its sky  
Till the sound of our voices talking softly by;

Not until our steps sound the wings can lift and go  
To a far shining country that no human steersmen know.

Shaking free the shaped hours, a heavy cloak flung clear,  
Freed of things called "day" and "night," dreams named  
"far" and "near."

In a crack between the smallest hours when no clocks  
chime

We two shall cross the moment and go silently from time.

MARGARET WIDDEMER.

*Mist*

The hills are dimmed to memories, in tiers  
The town, a blue dream, turns to aging stone;  
And all is blurred, as something seen through years,  
That once was definite and near and known.  
Like rapture time has reaped, the soft mist hold  
The gold and scarlet of each separate tree—  
A frozen mountain lost among its folds,  
A river widening slowly to the sea.  
The mist is passionless—it cools and stills  
The fevers that are borne for beauty's sake;  
With autumn flaming on a hundred hills,  
It stills the heart that otherwise must break. . . .  
I love the mist that keeps the soul secure  
From more of earth than it could well endure.

ADA HASTINGS HEDGES.

*Autumn*

The leaves fall, fall as from afar,  
As though distant gardens were withering in the sky,  
They fall with gestures negative and sad,  
And falling, sigh and sigh.

And in the night the heavy earth falls flashing by  
Into vast loneliness past every star.

We all fall, this hand falls thus at my commands,  
And each the same natural law obeys,  
Yet there is One who holds this falling always  
Without ceasing, so gently in His hands.

Translated from the German  
of Rainer Maria Rilke, by ANNE RYAN.



## BOOKS

## India at First Hand

*John Marshall in India, by Shafaat Ahmad Khan. New York: The Oxford University Press. \$7.00.*

THIS volume contains two of the four manuscripts left by John Marshall to his university friends, Dr. Henry Moore and Dr. John Covell, in 1677. These two have been well arranged, as regards facts and events, by Dr. Khan of Allahabad University, as Volume V of that institution's studies in history.

Like many Englishmen who went to India, John Marshall spent his spare time on protracted journeys, and during the long evenings after office hours, in studying local dialects, folk-lore and customs; so that Marshman, in the Harleian Manuscripts 4254 and 4255, speaks of him as "the earliest Englishman who really studied Indian antiquities." Indeed, it is surprising how useful John Marshall and Sir William Jones are as guides in these modern days, for the student upon facts, geography and events of India. Dr. Khan asserts that in his opinion the first volume of John Marshall in India will probably start the complete revision of our conceptions of seventeenth-century India, a period which witnessed the zenith and the incipient decline of the Moghul dynasty.

John Marshall landed in Madras after a six months' voyage from England, September, 1668, from a British East India-man called the Unicorn, a vessel of 330 tons, armed with 30 guns. Because of the wars and rivalry between the British and the Dutch from 1665 to the treaty of Westminster, vessels were armed when proceeding down channel to the East. When John Marshall landed at Madras, Shah Jehan had been deposed and imprisoned by his son Aurangzebe Alamgiri, a Mohammedan monarch possessed of immense industry and energy, but a religious fanatic, who persecuted the Hindus, pulled down their temples, using the material in them to erect Mohammedan mosques upon the same sites; harassed the Rajputs until they rose against him, and for twenty-five years fought Sivaji, the Mahratta chief, thus generally producing unrestrained discord which naturally made commercial trading unpleasant and often unprofitable.

I will cite only one incident which should sufficiently indicate this: About September 7, 1670, when the Vakil (native go-between or agent) of the East India Company was anxious to clear the English boats, he desired a friend, Mamood Hussain, to intercede so as to obtain leave to depart; to which intercession the Nawab Ibrahim Khan (later a wazer under Aurangzebe) replied: "Are they English of my religion or are they Musselmans? They are neither, nor are they friends to God or man: so that should I do them any courtesy, God would be displeased with me, and men would not praise me."

The volume is full of incidents and stray bits of information concerning the customs and beliefs of the natives, many of illuminating character, sometimes not without humor, such as the following saying of the Hindus describing the beauties of woman: "Her face is like the moon, her eyes are as a deer's, her gait like that of an elephant." There is humor, too, in this Arabian account of the temptation of Adam: "When the devil went first to tempt Adam, he proffered him many things which he rejected; and when he brought gold, Adam slighted it; but when he brought Eve, a woman, with her Adam was much pleased and accepted her. So when the devil was going away he made to carry the gold, but Adam told

him that as he now had got a woman, he could find use for the gold, which before he could not."

In one paragraph upon the use of "Rais de Joan Lapis," Marshall says: "This is a wood which is good against fevers, if ground in warm water; for agues, if ground in sack. 'Tis good against impostumes (abscesses) if ground in lime water and applied to the grieved parts." The term "Rais de Joan Lapis" recalls the action of the Corrigidor of Loxa who sent a parcel of quinquina bark in 1638 to the physician attending the Comtesse de Chinchon when suffering from fever and ague at Lima. Hence the name Chinchona Bark. The Corrigidor's name was Don Juan Lopez de Canizaries. Hence the title "Rais de Joan Lapis," as Marshall spells it. That an incident which took place in Lima, Peru, in 1638 should be known in Bengal in 1670 is interesting, for this was a period when postal connections were practically confined to those areas which could be reached by sailing vessels, letters being thereafter taken by travelers overland from the ports.

John Marshall left, as a result of ten years in India, innumerable papers and manuscripts which have found their way to the Harleian Society and to the British Museum and now, at long last, are being brought to daylight. No work could be more useful than that of cataloguing and indexing the vast amount of oriental manuscript material held in various libraries and societies so that our information on the East may be increased. Here is a great and desirable work in which it is hoped American Orientalists will not only be allowed, but will volunteer, to take part. In the past the Orient has too often meant the near East, the smallest part of Asia, while the continent of Asia has hardly been touched; much harm has been done by the too readily expressed desire of publishers to print the records of tourists in preference to the more enduring work of the Orientalist and the Sinologue.

BOYD-CARPENTER.

## The Songs of Gaul

*The Romanesque Lyric, by Philip Schuyler Allen. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. \$4.50.*

PROFESSOR ALLEN'S book is supposed to explain what happened to poetry after Horace had stopped going along the Appian Way. As a matter of fact it accounts for so much else that the topic has a chance to emerge only here and there. This circumstance may annoy those who yearn to find information where it is supposed to be, but redounds to the very great satisfaction of anyone who is genuinely curious about the origins of modern European civilization. There is some good writing about Gaul after the tide had turned against Rome; much excellent speculation regarding the influence of Ireland, Greece and Arabia upon the spirit that gradually came to merit the title "Romanesque"; abundant, though desultory criticism of divers scholars who have dug too long in one fosse without coming up for air; and—it is indispensable to add—attractive versions of numerous poems by Howard Mumford Jones, in whom American academia seems to possess what may be termed a treasure.

The essence of our author's main contention is summarized in the following paragraph: "The second and third centuries of the Christian era are ordinarily accounted a dark age dividing the silver twilight of the hundred years succeeding the age of Horace from the brief but brilliant renaissance of the fourth century. That is the panoramic picture of poetic development as viewed by the professed classicist. But to the vision of the student of Romanesque the second and third

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centuries of our era contain in embryo all that the future has in store for Latin mediaeval verse." Professor Allen is a "student of Romanesque" with an excellent, though somewhat rambling case. A new magic, of which only a certain premonition exists in Vergil, appears to inspire the poetry that takes its rise with Petronius.

In such a view the Celt is always a conspicuous part of the scene. "Nothing is more dangerous," we are told, "to a proper understanding of the transmission of culture from ancient days to ours than an undervaluation of the rôle played by ancient Irish monasteries and monastic schools." The Irish monk was marked by a consuetudo peregrinandi—a "search for the rainbow's end" halted only by the barriers of Iceland. Characteristic of him was an "earnest, single-hearted pursuit of learning in the widest sense attainable, and his solid hard work as a scholar." Furthermore, "during the fourth and fifth centuries Ireland had become, if not the sole legatee, at least the outstanding inheritor of a classical culture well on its way toward Christianized modernism." And the Irish lyrics! Beowulf is said to be redolent of their "periphrastic manner at its worst"—certainly a novel remark in so far as the run of old English study is concerned.

There is no time to deal with the rest of Professor Allen's argument. Much of it merits quotation, and much more reverberates in the reader's ears as a corrective of mistaken or confused impressions. He is fully appreciative of monastic culture, though not (if I judge correctly) of monastic faith. Perhaps the case against Funck-Brentano and other similar students of the post-Roman period is not so complete as he fancies. Perhaps he has read more modernity into the Merovingian mind than actually exists there. But the survey is remarkably competent, the perspectives are fascinating and the breath of human feeling is never lost. One hopes the book will get into the hands of many students, for their instruction and edification. In their gratitude none of these will, I hope, pause to regret unduly the typographical errors that have been allowed to perch annoyingly here and there.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER.

## Fear in Two Phases

*Seven Days Whipping*, by John Biggs, jr. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.00.

*The Golem*, by Gustav Meyrink. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. \$2.50.

NEXT to romantic love, fear is probably the favorite emotion of the novelist. Amorphous fear, bordering on the psychopathic, and at times no more comprehensible to the reader than to the chief character of the story, seems to be the motif of John Biggs's *Seven Days Whipping*. The outline of the tale is simple enough: a certain Judge La Place condemns an Indian to ten years' imprisonment, and then goes home to tend a swarm of bees. The Indian's son brings a deer he has slain to the Judge, and insists that he accept it. But La Place, overcome by an emotion of primitive savagery—of which fear is perhaps the chief ingredient—shoots the Indian and afterward declares several times "There was pleasure in it." What shall we make of these few facts, set down by Mr. Biggs in a jerky, declarative manner?

Evidently the author is studying a subtle and nameless atavism, a mental condition verging on insanity. In doing so, he is attempting to extend the novel beyond physical actuality into the shadowy realms of the psychic. It is a tenuous, difficult piece of business, and not conspicuously successful. Joseph

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Conrad has done the same thing repeatedly, and at times he gets pretty wearisome in doing it. In the attempt to stretch Judge La Place's emotions upon a slender framework of domestic events, Mr. Biggs sacrifices narrative speed, power and that most precious of free gifts—the reader's interest.

In the horror-breeding novel *The Golem*, Gustav Meyrink has treated fear in diametrical contrast to Mr. Biggs's method. Meyrink's fantastic, semi-oriental allegory is essentially Jewish in its coloring and locale. The ghetto of Prague, and the superstitious terror inspired by the century-old mechanical man, the Golem, enable Gustav Meyrink to achieve a mysterious sense of fear that the American author never succeeds in approximating. The genius of *The Golem* is the Semitic genius of introspection. Fear is essentially an introspective emotion, and cannot be attained by a straightforward Anglo-Saxon narration of external facts. Where Mr. Biggs is tentative and thin, Meyrink revels in warm and colorful authenticity.

The Golem is a combination of human pathos and supernatural fear, of waking pain and dreaming terror. Along the subterranean alleys of the ghetto and into the unplumbed depths of the subconscious mind, Gustav Meyrink extends his narrative feelers. The Golem is an amazing feat, a story-telling coup that leaves one shaking his head in admiration for the author, and pondering over the unforgettable adventures of Athanasius Pernath, the hero. Both *The Golem* and *Seven Days Whipping* are studies in fear; but by comparison the latter is a pallid and inconsequential sketch of a novice in the art of fear-making.

HENRY MORTON ROBINSON.

### Selling the Classics

*The Delight of Great Books*, by John Erskine. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. \$2.50.

WHAT the author of *The Delight of Great Books* has attempted primarily is to follow the accepted lines of efficient salesmanship and sell the general reading public on the joys that await them in those traditional bugaboos, the standard classics. And it is quite likely that he will succeed, for he has a plausible creed, a persuasive and entertaining style, and he appeals to that latent vanity which loves to be assured that our individual judgment is as good as the next man's, whether it be a question of choosing a new necktie or a Ford car or a literary masterpiece. It would be amusing to know just how many puzzled brows are now wrinkling, in an effort to spell an arduous course through the opening lines of Chaucer's Prologue, because Mr. Erskine rather cruelly guaranteed it to be a simple task.

Yet the fallacies of his whole modernistic creed are sufficiently obvious. He chooses to ignore the sound doctrine that what we get out of any book, any work of art, great or small, depends mainly upon what we ourselves bring to it, our mental and spiritual equipment, our breadth and elasticity of mind, our imagination, our experience, our receptivity. "The approach to literature is always through life," says Mr. Erskine sententiously, "and if a book no longer reflects our life, it will cease to be generally read." This is as true as most platitudes, and proves as little. In the middle-ages, Homer no longer reflected life and ceased to be generally read, but that was no proof that the Iliad's majesty and beauty had waned; it was merely one more indictment of the middle-ages. The vital thing that we should demand of a book is that it reflect life—but not necessarily our life, the transitory, fugitive now



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and here, about which our generation is far too conscious and too complacent. Quite recently Mr. Chesterton said in these columns: "It is the chief inferiority of modern people that they do think about being modern." This, it would seem, is a chronic ailment of John Erskine; he cannot help thinking in terms of today. He shuts his eyes to the fact that other epochs and other codes, other civilizations, have in their way been as momentous and still have as much to offer, in high thinking and high achievement, as our own; and that the effort to steep ourselves in those far-off, vanished times and "become contemporary" is perhaps as well worth while as are the mental gymnastics required to convince ourselves that Helen and Guinevere were at heart sophisticated modern vamps and that Galahad and Adam and Menelaus had the makings of good Rotarians.

And really, despite Mr. Erskine, there is a connection between "the approximate date of the Parthenon and an architectural appreciation of the building." Until you are steeped in the lore and tradition of a period, you merely glimpse the surface of any unique loveliness in art, whether it be the Parthenon or the Milo Venus, or Giotto's Tower, or The Divine Comedy. A Keats sees an ancient frieze and achieves an Ode to a Grecian Urn; while a Babbitt visits the Acropolis and meditates on a suitable mausoleum for himself in the Gopher Prairie cemetery.

Mr. Erskine's summaries are sympathetic, and everywhere they bear testimony to that very type of erudition that he so carefully assures us is superfluous for understanding and for profit. Indeed, if what he calls the purely historical material were all eliminated, the bulk of the volume would shrink perceptibly, and the part that remained would be proportionately flat and unprofitable.

FREDERIC TABER COOPER.

**The Humanity of Genius**

*Napoleon, the Man, by R. McNair Wilson. New York: The Century Company. \$5.00.*

IT IS easy to see that the author of this fascinating book is entirely under the influence of Napoleon, or rather of the latter's immense work. This enthusiasm does not make him lose sight of the failings of his colossal genius; but in explaining them, he finds reasons which bring vividly before us the various moral and intellectual struggles through which Napoleon had to find his way in order to fulfill the destiny to which he had been born. Mr. Wilson uses entirely different methods from those employed by Ludwig in his biography of the great emperor; and after reading the German writer's story, one turns with a far more human interest toward Mr. Wilson's book. Being the story of a man, it can be properly understood by men, and does not require the training of a scholar to be appreciated.

The description of Napoleon's early years at Brienne, and later on as an officer, after he had obtained his commission, is more than interesting. It is not so much a description as the plain laying out of the facts out of which one of the greatest geniuses the world has known developed itself. It helps one to understand him, and what is perhaps even more important, to understand certain of his most indefensible actions. In saying this I am thinking of the execution of the unfortunate Duke of Enghien. While nothing can take away its horror, yet one can put oneself into Napoleon's place, and realize that, as things stood then, it was a question of "he or I." This, I repeat, is the attractive point in Mr. Wilson's book. He always brings



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his readers to think as his hero must have thought at this or that particular moment, while at the same time never trying to minimize any of his faults or errors.

I like far less the passages dealing with Josephine, which I think are at times too harsh and at others not exact. She deserves more justice and less sympathy. On the other hand, no better description has yet been given of the duplicity of Alexander I of Russia, of the mixture of triumph and apprehension which filled the soul of Napoleon when he was placed suddenly face to face with the sovereigns he had humiliated and beaten on the battlefield, or of the restrained agony which must have filled the heart of the beautiful Queen Louise of Prussia. It is one of the best chapters in this great book.

Among the very true remarks in this life of a great man is the one that "in the age in which he lived, Napoleon was a moral man." This is precisely the point of view which ought to be taken, but which rarely is taken. We judge the emperor according to our present standards, while we ought to apply to him, if we want to be just, those of the troubled days through which he fought his way to greatness, and his throne.

It is to be regretted that certain errors in regard to names and personalities have been allowed to creep into the text, such, for instance, as the curious way of calling the too famous Loménie de Brienne, "Lord Brienne," which at the best is a ridiculous mistake; the writer persists in it all through the chapters in which this hated minister of Louis XVI figures. But all this is insignificant compared with the talent displayed in a very remarkable book.

CATHERINE RADZIWIŁŁ.

## Castilian and Gael

*Relicario*, by Antonio Gomez Restrepo. Rome: Tipographica Salesiana.

*The Grey Feet of the Wind*, by Cathal O'Byrne. Chicago: The Ard-Ree Press.

IN ENGLISH poetry the palms of the great singer of wedded love have long been awarded Coventry Patmore; in Spanish letters, the same title must be granted to Antonio Gomez Restrepo, at the present time the minister plenipotentiary from Colombia to the Quirinal, and for many years at the head of the very fine school of modern poetry in his native land. A great artist and profound student of letters, his library is one of the valued possessions of the capital Bogotá, where his editions of Rafael Pombo and of Caro have been published at the government's expense.

The crush of sorrow brought upon Señor Gomez Restrepo by the death of his wife, Paulina Maltarino, daughter of one of the greatest families of Colombia, has pressed from a very highly cultivated breast the essence of a poetry lofty, constrained and of exquisite beauty. The Latin polish of the finest Castilian style of his age has been penetrated by a pure lyrical grief of most unusual sweetness and emotional depth. The appearance of his *Relicario* places the name of Antonio Gomez Restrepo at the forefront of Hispanic literature. It is to be hoped that some translator capable of handling the finer things of letters will soon give to English readers the opportunity of estimating the very noble poetry of this Colombian master.

The *Grey Feet of the Wind* proves, also, that a place must be held among our poets for Cathal O'Byrne, some of whose versions from the Irish have appeared in the columns of *The Commonwealth*. Mr. O'Byrne is highly endowed with the Gaelic gift of lyricism. His voice is singing in every intonation, and the generous softness and melting qualities of Gaelic



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from which he has transcribed some excellent fragments, has entered into his original poetry, constituting it a true Irish voice speaking in English. It is unfortunate the reviewing space will not allow a fuller illustration of this interesting quality in Mr. O'Byrne's poetry, but in *The Niggard*, perhaps, a strong touch of it may characterize his excellent volume:

"My seven curses on the niggardly loon,

May his tormentors never desist,

Who would reach you down—and he could—the moon,

And fill your mouth with a spoonful of mist."

THOMAS WALSH.

## A Satirical Cleric

*The Day*, by Giuseppe Parini; translated into English blank verse by Herbert Morris Bower. London: George Routledge and Sons, Limited.

NEARLY two hundred years ago—May 22, 1729—in the little town of Bosisio, not far from Lake Como, was born one who is now usually ranked among the best Italian poets of modern times. Giuseppe Parini was brought to Milan at the age of nine and later placed in a school conducted by the Barnabites. In 1754 he was ordained priest. From 1773 until his death on August 15, 1799, he was professor of literature and fine arts at the Brera, in Milan.

Parini's first volume of verses appeared in 1752 and from that time the Milanese poet composed many pastoral sonnets, satires, and canzone in Italian, as well as some verses in the Milanese dialect. Longer works include the cantata *Jephtha's Daughter* and *Ascanio in Alba*, afterward put to music by the youthful Mozart. But Parini's great work is *The Day*.

In *The Day* the poet portrays, with light satirical touch, the life of the beau monde of eighteenth-century Italy as he saw it exemplified in the Lombard capital. Of the four parts into which *The Day* is divided, *The Morning* was published anonymously in 1763, and *Midday* two years later. *Evening* and *Night* were written much later and neither appeared before the public until after the poet's death.

In the present version—the first in English verse—the translator has succeeded admirably in rendering for English readers the spirit as well as the content of the Italian original. An able introduction and notes add to the value of the volume.

C. R. D. MILLER.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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